A STUDY IN JOHN WESLEY'S DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM IN THE LIGHT OF CURRENT INTERPRETATIONS

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PREFACE

The value of John Wesley as a theologian has been appreciated anew in recent years by a number of writers, and books have been written covering many areas of his theology. Nevertheless it is surprising that so little has been written about his doctrine of Holy Baptism, at a time when Methodism is stirred by a revival of interest concerning the question of baptism in the present day church. Therefore it is felt that a study in Wesley's doctrine of baptism is "the more relevant" to the present concern within Methodism.[1]

This dissertation is intended to analyse the teaching of Wesley regarding baptism, and to clarify problems raised by differing interpretations among Wesley scholars. This study is confined to Wesley's own view on the subject, as expressed in his writings. It is hoped that this study may contribute to the continuing rediscovery of the significance of John Wesley for today. It is also our aim that this study may help the evangelical church of Korea to appreciate and recapture Wesley's attitude to the sacraments, applying it, as also his evangelical spirit, to the problems which today face the Korean church.

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[1] Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, xxxii (1960), p. 121.

There are many to whom I am indebted, who helped me when, a stranger to so many of the ways of America, I came to my graduate work at Emory University. A proper recognition of them all is not possible here. However, I am especially appreciative to a number of persons who have been more directly involved in this effort.

Professor Claude H. Thompson, the Advisor of this dissertation, and Professor John Lawson, one of the major readers of this dissertation, have exercised great patience and insight in directing this study. For the invaluable assistance I have received I wish to express my hearty thanks. I am also grateful to Dr. Mack B. Stokes, one of the major readers of this dissertation, and Chairman of the Division of Religion of the Graduate School of Emory University, for his assistance and encouragement during the period of research. However, despite this necessary assistance I assume responsibility for the conclusions drawn in this study.

Finally, my deep appreciation goes to Professor Dennis F. Kinlaw, then Visiting Professor of Theology in Seoul Theological Seminary, Korea, through whom my interest was first drawn to the theology of Wesley, and who inspired me to come to American for further theological training.

However, the chief sacrifice has been cheerfully borne by my wife, my children, and by my elderly mother, during years of absence from home. I am grateful for their loving support.

ABBREVIATIONS

Christian Library	*A Christian Library*. Edited by John Wesley. 30 vols. London, 1822.
FOC Paper	"Faith and Order Commission Paper" of World Council of Churches.
Journal	*The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.* Edited by Nehemiah Curnock, 8 vols. London: The Epworth Press, 1938.
Letters	*The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.* Edited by John Telford, 8 vols. London: The Epworth Press, 1960.
Notes	John Wesley, *The Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, London: The Epworth Press, 1954.
Poetical Works	*The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*. Edited by G. Osburn, 13 vols. London: Wesleyan Methodist Conference Office, 1867-1872.
Proc. W. H. S.	*Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*. A periodical issued by the Wesley Historical Society, England.
Sunday Service	John Wesley, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in the North America, with other Occasional Services*. London, 1784.
Sunday Service (1786)	John Wesley, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in The United States of America, With other Occasional Services*. London, 1786.
Works	*The Works of John Wesley*. An edition of the complete and unabridged *Works* by the photo offset process from the authorized edition published by the Wesleyan Conference Office in London, 1872. 14 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958.

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER ONE

THE PLACE OF BAPTISM IN THE PRESENT DAY CHURCH

G. W. H. Lampe opens his book, The Seal of the Spirit, by observing that Bishop Westcott, before the turn of the 20th century, prophesied that the next great theological controversy would center around the doctrine of baptism. He goes on to say, "There are many signs that the controversy which he expected is now developing."[1] Many contemporary theologians witness to this fact. For example, E. A. Payne says, "One of the notable features of the theological discussions of the past thirty years has been the increasing attention given to baptism."[2] D. M. Baillie writes, "There is no doubt that in very diverse quarters, from high Anglicanism to Continental Protestantism there has in recent years been a new consciousness of the problems surrounding this sacrament (of baptism)."[3] Karl Barth states that "The question of baptism really reaches to the very height and depth of the church's responsibility."[4] And Robert S. Paul says, "Whatever the official attitude of the confessions there has been a very remarkable revival of interest in Baptism on the part of the theologians, and it has resulted in a discussion that is both ecumenical and international."[5] This widespread interest in the doctrine of baptism is illustrated in the extensive bibliographies on the subject published in recent years.[6] This is also seen today in the areas of Biblical theology and the ecumenical movement.

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[1] G. W. H. Lampe, The Seal of the Spirit (London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1951), p. vii.

[2] E. A. Payne, "Baptism in Recent Discussion" in A. Gilmore, ed., Christian Baptism (3rd ed. London, Lutterworth Press, 1960), p. 15.

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[3] Donald M. Baillie, The Theology of the Sacraments (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 72.

[4] Karl Barth, The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism, trans. E. A. Payne (6th ed. London, SCM Press, 1963), p. 38.

[5] Robert S. Paul, The Atonement and the Sacraments (New York, Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 322.

[6] See bibliographies, for example, W. C. C., One Lord, One Baptism (London, SCM Press, 1960), pp. 74-76; A. Gilmore, ed., Christian Baptism (London, Lutterworth Press, 1960), pp. 327-332; Joachim Jeremias, Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries, trans. D. Cairns (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 101-104; G. R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament (London, Macmillan & Co., 1962), pp. 396-406.

A. THE QUESTION OF BAPTISM IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY, ESPECIALLY IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

"One of the subjects," as J. Alan Kay says, "which has come very much to the fore in Christian thinking in recent years is that of baptism."[7] The doctrine of baptism, especially the question of infant baptism, has become a live issue among contemporary theologians. We shall briefly see the rise of interest in Christian baptism, and survey the main trends of current discussion about this sacrament, citing some important works.

The concern of many theologians for reality in Christian life and worship has called the church's attention to her practice and theology of baptism. For so many baptized persons are without any sense of its theological meaning. This problem was already confronted by Soren Kierkegaard in the Danish Church of his day. Many people thought that they were already Christians simply because they had been born Danes and baptized in infancy. In Kierkegaard's judgment, this was not Christianity but an illusion, for there was no existential meaning to it. The emphasis of a number of scholars now appears to run directly counter to the customary baptismal practice of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed Churches, all of which practice infant baptism. Hence it is not surprising that some contemporary theologians and churchmen are puzzled over the practice of baptism, especially infant baptism.

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[7] _London Quarterly and Holborn Review_ (1961), p. 157.

So far as theological discussion is concerned, the issue was first provocatively raised by Emil Brunner's Olaus lectures in Uppsala in 1937, published with the title, Warheit als Begegnung, in 1938, and first published in English as The Divine-Human Encounter in 1943. Brunner protests that

> Most of the contemporary neopagans and also most members of atheistic societies have been baptized as infants; what does the grace of Baptism, of which in any event they probably never even heard, mean for them? What does the fact of having been baptized mean for the large number of contemporary people who do not know and do not even care to know whether they have been baptized?[8]

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[8] Emil Brunner, Truth as Encounter, trans. A. W. Loos & D. Cairns (a new edition, much enlarged of The Divine-Human Encounter, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 183-184.

He thinks that infant baptism becomes a highly questionable practice because it is reduced to a custom without any conviction of faith. It also becomes a problematic arrangement when judged on the basis of an important assertion of the Reformation: Nullum sacramentum sine fide - sacrament without faith is not valid. Brunner, therefore, concludes that "the contemporary practice of infant Baptism can hardly be regarded as being anything short of scandalous."[9] He claims that since "the sacrament of the New Testament is . . . a bifrontal happening in which God says 'yes' to man and man says 'yes' to God,"[10] baptism must be understood "not only as an act of grace, but just as much an act of confession stemming from the act of grace."[11]

Yet it was Karl Barth who provoked an intensive debate on the issue. His lecture in May, 1943, under the title, Die kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe came as a distinct shock to many, adding great weight to Brunner's protest. Barth's lecture was published in 1948 in English under the title, The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism. By this publication the tempo of the debate was greatly increased. Since then numerous books and articles on the topic have been produced.[12] Among them the most notable and immediate response to Barth's challenge was a reply of Oscar Cullmann. Cullmann's reply was issued in 1948 under the title, Die Tauflehre des Neuen Testaments, and was published in 1950 in English as Baptism in the New Testament. It is a profoundly stimulating essay on the subject in the light of theology, claiming to be strictly biblical.

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[9] Ibid., p. 185.

[10] Ibid., p. 184.

[11] Ibid., p. 181.

Barth finds the institution of the rite of baptism in the baptism of Jesus Christ in relation to His death and resurrection.[13] According to Barth "Baptism is the acted parable of His death, in which man is at his own baptism 'planted'. It is a repetition of Christ's baptism."[14] Christ is the Lord and power (Kraft) of baptism. "Baptism is the representation, the seal, the sign, the copy, the symbol of our redemption"[15] through one's participation by the power of the Holy Spirit in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and therewith the representation of man's association with Christ, with the covenant of grace and with the fellowship of His church.[16] Therefore, for Barth, baptism is the representation of the *Heilsgeschichte* which comes to pass between God and man in Jesus Christ. If preaching is the "audible sign" of Christian teaching and instruction, baptism is then the "visible sign" of the same words.[17] Yet, according to Barth, baptism is not the cause of our redemption: it rather has to do with the *cognitio salutis*.[18] Therefore, baptism, he says, inevitably concerns the one baptized, although it is "part of the church's proclamation."[19]

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[12] See, S. J. England, "A Survey of Some Recent Literature on Baptism," Encounter 21: p. 339.

[13] Barth, The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism, p. 18.

[14] Ibid., p. 18.

[15] Ibid., p. 27.

The principles which underlie the order (*Ordnung*) of baptism are two: the church which baptizes and the person who is being baptized. The first principle lies in the fact "that baptism takes place as part of the errand of the church responsibly undertaken and accomplished."[20] This calls for confession of faith, prayer, public observance, and setting in public worship. Secondly, it means that there must be "the responsible willingness of the baptized person to receive the promise of the grace directed towards him, and to be party to the pledge of allegiance concerning the grateful service demanded of him."[21] Barth believes that "baptism without the willingness and readiness of the baptized . . . is not administered according to proper order, and therefore it is necessarily clouded baptism."[22] Thus Barth excludes infant baptism. He claims that

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[16] *Ibid*., p. 9.

[17] *Ibid*., p. 14.

[18] *Ibid*., p. 27.

[19] *Ibid*., p. 16.

[20] *Ibid*., p. 37. The following translation may convey the better meaning of the text in German. ". . . that baptism takes place within the Commission of the Church, responsibly taken over and carried out." The original text reads as follows: "(Die eine Grundlage in Sachen der Ordnung der Taufe besteht darin,) dass das Taufen im verantwortlich übernommenen und ausgeführten Auftrag der Kirche geschieht."

> Neither by exegesis nor from the nature of the case can it be established that the baptized person can be a merely passive instrument (*Behandelter*). Rather it may be shown, by exegesis and from the nature of the case, that in this action the baptized is an active partner (*Handelnder*) and that at whatever stage of life he may be, plainly no *infans* can be such a person.[23]

With this famous book Barth virtually "has become a standard theological defense of believer's baptism,"[24] and

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Die kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe, Zürich, 1953, p. 25.

[21] *Ibid*., p. 40.

[22] *Ibid*.

[23] *Ibid*., p. 41.

[24] *Encounter* 21: p. 340.

even, according to Cullmann "the most serious challenge to infant baptism which has ever been offered."[25]

Oscar Cullmann agrees with Barth in a number of important points. As the title of the first chapter of his book, Baptism in the New Testament, suggests, he too, like Barth, sees the foundation of baptism in Christ's death and resurrection. According to him, the baptism of Jesus Christ points forward to the climax of His life, that is to say, to that death and resurrection in which all men have already in principle been baptized. This baptism, he calls, "general baptism."[26] This baptism is the ground of the baptism of individuals. He writes,

> It is he, Jesus, who will not only baptize individual men with water like John the Baptist but will complete the general Baptism, for all men, and once for all, at the moment of his atoning death. It belongs to the essence of this general Baptism effected by Jesus, that it is offered in entire independence of the decision of faith and understanding of those who benefit from it. Baptismal grace has its foundation here, and it is in the strict sense 'prevenient grace.'[27]

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[25] Cullmann, Op. cit., p. 8.

[26] Ibid., p. 19.

[27] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

Here Cullmann differs from Barth. Barth holds the idea of *cognitio salutis* as an essential thing in baptism, which is obviously not possible in an infant. Therefore Barth believes that the practice of infant baptism is not correct, but it is "an arbitrary and despotic" practice.[28] But Cullmann claims that "proper doctrine in the New Testament is quite compatible with infant Baptism."[29] He understands Christian baptism primarily as a divine act wholly independent of men, setting man within the Body of Christ, with man as the passive recipient of the free and effective grace of God. To this divine act man only makes the response of grateful faith. Cullmann thinks that only according to this view is the baptism of the individual in harmony with "the general baptism" which Jesus Christ carried out in His death and resurrection. Cullmann says,

> The grace of Baptism is not only a 'picture' of *gratia praeveniens* which God has applied to us at Golgotha. It is more: a once-for-all even *entirely dependent on Golgotha*, and also a *new and special* manifestation of the *same gratia praeveniens.* The divine act of salvation advances into the time of the Church.[30]

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[28] Barth, *Op. cit.*, p. 41.

[29] *Cullmann*, *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

Therefore our participation in what was done once-for-all (*ἐφάπαξ*) on the cross and in the resurrection occurs through his being set within the church, His Body. Thus Cullmann is contrasted with Barth who conceives the primary event in baptism as the *cognitio* *salutis*. For Cullmann baptism is not merely a *cognitio*, but is "a *new* *work* of Christ" in the event of baptism, "which for the members of the Church in a special sense 'effects' participation in Christ's death and resurrection at this particular place, the Church."[31] That is to say, as the prevenient grace which already was operative in the cross and resurrection extends to the individual entirely without his cooperation of faith, so the same prevenient grace extends into the time of the Church in baptism.[32] It is expressed in his own words as follows,

> In fact, it is itself grace: it effects the 'putting on of Christ' (Gal. 3.27), just as the incorporation of a young man in the army involves, as it were automatically, his being clothed in a uniform.[33]

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[31] *Ibid*., p. 35n.

[32] *Ibid*., p. 23, and also pp. 19-20.

[33] *Ibid*., p. 36.

With regard to the relation of baptism to faith, both Barth and Cullmann recognize the important role of faith. But, for Cullmann faith which precedes baptism is not a constitutive element of the baptismal event. Baptism is rather an unconditional prevenient act of God in Christ. Faith of the recipient "essentially belongs to the second and not to the first act of the event of baptism."[34] In other words, as baptism points to the future, so it demands from the future a human response, faith. However it does not mean that Cullmann is unaware that in some instances of the administration of baptism in the New Testament period, a confession of faith was demanded prior to baptism. But, according to him, this was not required as a condition of baptism itself, but simply as "a sign for the Church and a criterion to baptized adults of their being chosen."[35] What he tries to say is that the confession of faith does not belong to the essence of baptism, but only to its ordering. However, it does not mean that this position accords with the ex opere operato view of the sacrament, as Barth would object. For Cullmann believes that from the adult faith is demanded before baptism, and in the case of infant baptism, he highly regards the active role of the faith of the congregation and the idea of the solidarity of the family.[36] Moreover, Cullmann says that "to remain in this grace (of baptism) depends upon the subsequent human response."[37] Therefore the baptized person must receive "the gift of baptism anew each day within the Church of Christ. The effects of baptism as reception into the Body of Christ thus determine the whole of life."[38]

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[34] Ibid., p. 52.

[35] Ibid., p. 50.

Thus on the basis of the essence of meaning of baptism in the New Testament, Cullmann concludes that infant baptism is to be recognized as equally biblical as adult baptism.[39] This argument is further supported by his belief that baptism came to serve the function of both circumcision (which marked acceptance into the covenant people) and proselyte baptism (which represented cleansing). In the theological debate over baptism, Cullmann's view has virtually become a standard theological defence of infant baptism, just as Barth's has for believer's baptism.

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[36] But the faith of the congregation is not a vicarious faith, but it is an undertaking on behalf of the infant to lift the barrier to covenant status. See, Ibid., pp. 53-55.

[37] Ibid., p. 37.

[38] Ibid., p. 40.

[39] Ibid., p. 70. Cullmann firmly believes that "all discussion about Baptism should begin with the question, viz. with the theological definition on the essence and meaning of Baptism," (p. 24) instead of evidences of the practice in the New Testament.

Now these two positions of Barth and Cullmann have launched a vigorous discussion over the meaning of Christian baptism, especially infant baptism: believer's baptism versus infant baptism. For example,[40] a British Methodist scholar, W. F. Flemington in The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism,[41] takes up the same position as Cullmann. Flemington finds the authority of baptism in the ministry of Jesus Christ. The institution of baptism by Jesus Christ is, he says, "grounded in his whole life and teaching and especially in that particular divine activity which was manifested in his death and resurrection."[42]

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[40] It is not the intention of the present writer to give here an exhaustive survey of the continuing debate on the subject after Barth and Cullmann, except simply to illustrate the fact that the debate over believer's versus infant baptism still is prominent in recent theological thinking.

[41] First published in 1948 by S. P. C. K., London.

[42] Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism (4 ed. London, S. P. C. K., 1964), p. 129.

Therefore Christian baptism "recalls, and as it were re-presents, that act of God done once and for all for man's salvation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."[43] Baptism gives "outward embodiment to the apostolic preaching" - "a concrete symbol of the Kerygma."[44] According to Flemington, baptism (in the New Testament) is not only the means whereby the believer is grafted into the koinonia but also "the means whereby the saving Act of Christ's death and resurrection is made available for successive believers within the Christian fellowship."[45]

What then is the relation between baptism and faith? The relation, he thinks, must be properly appreciated, for "baptism and faith are but the outside and inside of the same thing."[46] However, taking the position against Barth, he says,

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[43] Ibid., p. 111.

[44] Ibid., p. 127.

[45] Ibid., p. 123.

[46] James Denney, The Death of Christ (1902), p. 185 cited by Flemington, Op. cit., p. 116.

> We must beware of any suggestion that it is this human faith that gives baptism its potency. The truth is rather . . . baptism can be subjectively significant only because, first of all, it is objectively real. Baptism can provide the typical expression of human faith, because, before that, baptism itself embodies the heart of the Kerygma.[47]

Flemington, therefore, sanctions infant baptism as "a thoroughly legitimate development of the New Testament teaching, a practice in full accord with the mind of Christ,"[48] although he, like Barth, admits that "there is no direct evidence in the New Testament for the baptism of infants."[49] Moreover he thinks that the practice of infant baptism accords with "the method of particular revelation,"[50] the incarnation. For it "unmistakably embodies the primary truth of the Christian gospel, namely that the grace of God comes before everything else, and that man's only hope of salvation rests upon that Act of God in Jesus Christ, for which . . . this sacrament of the gospel draws all its meaning and efficacy."[51] Therefore, the primary significance of infant baptism is not in dedicating the child to God, but rather in that God has done something for the child. It witnesses to the objective givenness of the Gospel.

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[47] Flemington, Ibid., p. 124.

[48] Ibid., p. 130.

[49] Ibid., p. 131. See also an article by Flemington in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1, p. 352.

[50] Ibid., p. 135.

The paedobaptist position is also defended by Pierre Ch. Marcel of the French Reformed Church, in his Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism.[52] In this book Marcel has sought the ground of infant baptism in the idea of one covenant which God has made with man and which continues through all time. Marcel believes that circumcision and baptism have essentially the same significance. If circumcision is to be regarded as the sign of the old covenant, baptism is the sign of the new. Thus he went further than Cullmann in the matter so as virtually to equate the meaning of circumcision with that of baptism.[53]

An exhaustive attempt to vindicate the position of infant baptism on historical ground is made by Joachim

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[51] Ibid., p. 147. Flemington says that sacraments are to be in accord with the mode of the Gospel and not of our experience, just as "the validity of the Gospel does not depend on human faith." (Ibid., p. 137).

[52] Its French edition, Le Baptême was published in 1950, and the English translation by P. E. Hughes was first published in 1953 by James Clarke & Co., London.

[53] See Part III, ii, "The Baptism of Children," in Marcel, Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism (2 ed. London, James Clarke & Co., 1959), pp. 198ff.

Jeremias. Following Cullmann, Jeremias published in 1949 the expanded German edition of Hat die Urkirche die Kindertaufe geübt? published in 1938, which took final form in the volume, Die Kindertaufe in den Ersten Vier Jahrhunderten in 1958. This book was published in English in 1960 under the title, Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries. Through his historical study of the oikos-formula,[54] some disputed passages in the New Testament,[55] the similarities between Christian baptism and proselyte baptism, and also evidences from early Christian writers and the statements in ancient inscriptions that cast light on the practice of baptism during the first centuries, Jeremias affirms that there was the practice of infant baptism already in apostolic times. According to him, there occurred "a great crisis in the matter of infant baptism"[56] in the fourth century. Many Christian parents postponed the baptism of their children as long as possible, in their belief that "the guilt contracted by sin after baptism would be still greater and more perilous,"[57] whereas sins committed before baptism were blotted out in the rite of baptism. But under the leadership of Church fathers like Augustine the "great crisis" was overcome and the practice of infant baptism was fully reestablished.[58]

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[54] "household," for example, in I Cor. 1:16, Acts 16:15, 16:33, 18:8, 11:14. (cf. Jeremias, Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries, pp. 19-23).

[55] Such as I Cor. 7:14c, Acts 21:21, Mark 10:13-16 (Ibid., pp. 43-55).

[56] Jeremias, Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries, trans. David Cairns (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1962), p. 87.

On the other hand, the position of Barth also has found an echo in many theologians. A fresh study of believer's baptism is represented in two recent books by British Baptists. These are A. Gilmore (editor), Christian Baptism: A Fresh Attempt to Understand the Rite in terms of Scripture, History and Theology[59] and G. R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament.[60] In Christian Baptism, various Baptist scholars have reexamined the doctrine of baptism from Biblical, historical and theological points of view, hoping to make it clear how Baptists view the matter in the light of recent scholarship.[61] The articles in this book in general are arguments for believer's baptism, denying the validity of infant baptism.

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[57] Ibid., p. 88.

[58] A further work in reply to Kurt Aland is Nochmals: Die Anfänge der Kindertaufe issued in 1962, and published in English under the title, The Origins of Infant Baptism in 1963.

[59] London, Lutterworth Press, 1959.

[60] London, Macmillan & Co., 1962.

[61] A. Gilmore, ed., Christian Baptism (3 ed. London, Lutterworth Press, 1960), p. 7.

There is an article on "The Theology of Baptism" written by Neville Clark, who is the author of An Approach to the Theology of the Sacraments[62] which has attracted considerable attention. Clark's view is much like that of Barth. He believes that the theology of baptism "must be written round the two poles of the baptism of Jesus at Jordan, and its fulfilment in His death, resurrection and ascension,"[63] and that baptismal interpretation must be "Christological through and through."[64] For Clark baptism is understood essentially as an incorporation into the whole saving history of Jesus Christ, "Totus Christus" - the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and parousia of Jesus Christ.[65] This saving history of Jesus Christ has taken place apart from any decision on our own, for it is God's prior act of grace.[66] "Baptism effects regeneration and new birth because, and only because, it sets us at Golgotha and the empty tomb."[67] Nevertheless Clark insists that if it be "Christological through and through," we must not separate the divine action and human action in the event of baptism. For in the whole life and ministry of the incarnate Lord, the primacy of the divine is clearly shown forth. At the same time, the obedience of the true man is also made crucial and explicit as we see, for example, at His own baptism at Jordan. Clark, therefore, says that the paedobaptist position does not fit into the pattern of the redemptive work of the God-man. For "salvation is not to be effected outside of, apart from, over the head of man."[68] In other words, although he frankly admits that "Baptist practice has enshrined the wrong emphasis"[69] that our salvation depends upon man, he insists that we must not emphasize this too much at the expense of "salvation by faith." Clark thus replies to the challenge of Cullmann that the grace of baptism is an extension of _gratia praeveniens_ which God applied to us all at Golgotha[70] as follows,

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[62] Chicago, Alec R. Allenson Inc., 1956.

[63] A. Gilmore, Op. cit., p. 306, also see p. 312.

[64] Ibid., p. 309.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., p. 313.

[67] Ibid.

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[67] _Ibid_.

[68] _Ibid_., p. 313. Clark further says, "to deny this would be to deny both the principle of incarnation and the pattern of the life and death of the incarnate Son." (_Ibid_.).

[69] _Ibid_., p. 323.

[70] Cullmann, _Op. cit_., pp. 33, 41.

> Incorporation into the Totus Christus, which baptism embodies, is rooted in the substitutionary work of the God-man and shares its character of divine act, but the differentia of the human response must never be denied. If the response itself be opus dei, yet incorporation must wait upon that Amen being spoken.[71]

Thus, on the basis of his understanding of New Testament theology of baptism, Clark denies the validity of infant baptism.[72]

The work of G. R. Beasley-Murray is a thorough examination of every New Testament text which may possibly have to do with the subject. He has tried to reply to Cullmann and Jeremias, as well as to others who in recent years have done much to defend the position of infant baptism, while he presents his painstaking study on the New Testament evidences about baptism. For it is his own conviction that baptism must embody the whole Gospel which holds grace and faith together and "No lesser baptism can contain this gospel."[73]

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[71] A. Gilmore, Op. cit., p. 319.

[72] Clark agrees with Barth and also with Cullmann that the appearance of the practice of infant baptism in the New Testament remains indecisive, and our "overriding appeal must always be to New Testament theology rather than New Testament practice." (Ibid., p. 311).

[73] Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, p. 382.

Kurt Aland's work, Die Säuglingstaufe im Neuen Testament und in der Alten Kirche: Eine Antwort an Joachim Jeremias, is worthy of mention. It is an answer to Jeremias in Die Kindertaufe in den ersten vier Jahrhunderten. It was published in English under the title, Did the Early Church Baptize Infants?, in 1963.[74] In contrast to Jeremias, Aland, using the same source materials, arrives at quite different conclusions. Aland argues that neither the oikos-formula, the usually cited passages of the New Testament, nor the evidences from early Christian writers and early Christian inscriptions, give any reliable evidence that infant baptism was already practiced before the third century. "The first unambiguous testimonies for infant baptism," he says, "emerge about the middle of the first half of the third century."[75] According to Aland, the custom of postponing the baptism of children in the fourth century was not the "crisis." It rather indicates that "infant baptism was not an absolutely binding requirement everywhere in the Church, . . . and that with that practice existed a baptism of children of a mature age which met with no ecclesiastical objection."[76] Thus he refutes Jeremias' main contentions point by point. To this Jeremias replied in his Nochmals: Die Anfänge der Kindertaufe.[77] The task which both Jeremias and Aland attempt is important, in that they try to work back from the known traditions of the ancient church, and also to work forward from the actual New Testament period. Yet, viewing it from another angle, a significant thing in this debate is that it illustrates the fact that historical investigation into the evidence of baptismal practice does not ultimately solve the problem. The question of infant baptism rather belongs to the realm of the theology of baptism, for it is ultimately a doctrinal matter.[78] Aland, on this basis, affirms the desirability of practicing infant baptism today, despite the fact, he found no clear evidence of it in New Testament times.

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[74] Translated by G. R. Beasley-Murray and published by SCM Press Ltd., in 1963.

[75] Aland, Did the Early Church Baptize Infants? (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1963), p. 79.

This survey cannot hope to cover all dialogues on the subject among contemporary theologians. Those works and theologians mentioned in this section are samples only, which disclose some trends in current discussion about the doctrine of baptism. With this in view, we may finally mention *The One Baptism* by Stephen J. England.[79] England presents and analyses the current discussion concerning baptism in the ecumenical scene with special reference to a particular denomination to which he himself belongs - Disciples of Christ. He significantly points out that the two contemporary theologians who will provide the definite positions in the discussion on baptism are Karl Barth on the one side, and Oscar Cullmann on the other.[80] For, although the two theologians' conclusions are different, the importance of their presentations (*theologishe Ansätze*), England thinks, is incalculable for the worldwide debate on baptism today. The most important significance is at two points. The first is their belief that the New Testament must be the norm for the theology and practice of Christian baptism. Secondly, both of them faced the basic issue concerning the nature of baptismal faith; the relation of faith to baptism surrounding the question of infant baptism.[81] England himself takes the side of Barth against

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[76] Ibid., p. 101.

[77] Published in 1962, and its English translation in 1963. Here it is sufficient to illustrate how the debate on infant baptism still is a live issue in recent scholarship. It is beyond the scope of this section to analyse the contents of debate between these two theologians.

[78] See Postscript, "Infant Baptism Today?" in Aland, Ibid., pp. 112-116.

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[79] St. Louis, The Bethany Press, 1960.

[80] England, *The One Baptism* (1960), p. 17.

[81] *Ibid*., pp. 23-24.

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Cullmann. But he calls his church to join in the current studies on baptism in the ecumenical movement, and to restudy the issue in the light of the New Testament.[82] In the section which follows we shall consider how this dialogue on baptism has been carried on in the ecumenical movement in recent years.

B. THE DISCUSSION OF BAPTISM IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The revival of interest in Christian baptism among contemporary theologians seems to have coincided with the discovery of the importance of baptism in the ecumenical movement. In fact, the ecumenical movement has raised the question.[83]

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[82] Ibid., p. 74. England believes that "baptism is deeply meaningful in relation to the unity of the Body of Christ."

[83] F. D. Gealey thinks that the renewed interest in Christian baptism is a direct product of the ecumenical movement in our century. (The Consultation on Church Union, vol. III, April 1964, p. 112). England says, "the discussion of baptism has become a part of the ecumenical movement." (The One Baptism, p. 7).

The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston in 1954 declared that "we must learn afresh the implications of the one Baptism for our sharing in the one Eucharist."[84] It is not only that baptism is important in itself, but also it is closely related to the unity of the church. The third world conference on Faith and Order met at Lund, Sweden, in 1953, and called attention of the churches to the doctrine of baptism.[85] After repeated frustration in the attempt to find a basis of unity for "intercommunion" at ecumenical gatherings, the delegates were driven to see the importance of the one baptism. The conference proposed that "all churches should give attention to the relationship of their theology and practice of Baptism to their theology and practice of the Lord's Supper."[86] The report also drew attention to a challenging opinion of T. F. Torrance:

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[84] W. C. C., *The Evanston Report*, ed. W. A. Visser 't Hooft (London, SCM Press Ltd., 1955), p. 90. *Minutes of Commission and Working Committee, Evanston & Chicago*, 1954 (FOC Paper #21), p. 25.

[85] *The Report of the Third World Conference of the Commission on Faith and Order at Lund*, Sweden, August 15-18, 1952 (SCM Press Ltd., 1952), pp. 36-45.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

> To refuse the Eucharist to those baptized into Christ Jesus and incorporated into His resurrection-body (i.e., the church) amounts either to a denial of the transcendent reality of Holy Baptism or to attempted schism within the Body of Christ.[87]

The participants at the Lund conference realized that a true understanding and implication of the one baptism might provide the new opening for fruitful discussion within the ecumenical circle, and at the same time the deeper understanding of the rite would make the unity in Christ of the Church more clearly visible.

However, shortly after the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston, the subject of baptism came to the center of attention in the theological discussion of the Commission on Faith and Order.[88] The theological commission (on Christ and the Church) launched a study on Christian baptism, and prepared a "working paper on baptism" for the full discussion at the Faith and Order Commission at New Haven in 1957. The Commission at New Haven opened the discussion with its challenging statement that

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[87] This is in the essay by Prof. T. F. Torrance in the preliminary volume, Intercommunion, the report of the Theological Commission appointed by the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order, edited by D. M. Baillie and John Marsh, 1952, p. 339. See also the report, p. 43.

[88] John E. Skoglund & J. Robert Nelson, Fifty Years of Faith and Order: An Interpretation of the Faith and Order Movement (St. Louis, The Bethany Press, 1963), p. 111. Also see, W. C. C., One Lord, One Baptism, p. 45.

> Within the disunity of the churches, the unity of baptism has remained. With few exceptions, the churches mutually recognize the baptisms which they administer and do not repeat the sacrament when there is transition from one church to another.[89]

This was very significant because with this conference "the Division of Studies of the World Council of Churches gave official recognition to the importance of Baptism."[90] In the general discussion, however, the "one Baptism" which had seemed at the outset to be common to all churches was faced by diverse and contrary interpretations. The Commission repeated in vain old and familiar controversies about baptism.[91] But the Commission did not give up its study. It directed its working committee and the theological commission on Christ and the Church to continue its study.

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[89] W. C. C., "Faith and Order Commission Paper" (this will be cited from now on simply at FOC Paper), #25, p. 14. "Working Paper on Baptism" was prepared by the Theological Commission on Christ and the Church in Europe (FOC Paper #25, p. 13). See Encounter 21: No. 3, p. 345, for papers which were prepared for the conference at New Haven.

[90] England, *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

[91] See FOC Paper #25, pp. 13-18.

Later in the same year, 1957, the North American section of the Commission on Faith and Order was held at Oberlin, Ohio, and studied "Baptism into Christ" as one of features of "The Nature of the Unity We Seek."[92] In 1958 there met in Europe, the working committee in which the issue of baptism was discussed.[93] In their discussion they made a full use of the important insight which was commended by the Lund conference that "the way to the unity is through the center, that is through the consideration of Christ and His work in us, rather than from the periphery, beginning with further considerations of our varying teachings and practices."[94] And finally at the joint-meeting of the two sections of the Commission, held at Tutzing in Bavaria in July 1959, the paper on "The Meaning of Baptism" was drafted for the full discussion at the forthcoming conference of the Commission on Faith and

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[92] The result of this conference was issued as Oberlin Reports: The Nature of the Unity We Seek (St. Louis, The Bethany Press, 1958). In the section III, a statement concerning baptism is reported, which consists of "Affirmations of Agreement" and "Statement of Differences" and a few comments, on "Baptism into Christ." pp. 37-42.

[93] See FOC Paper #26 (Geneva, July, 1958).

[94] W. C. C., One Lord, One Baptism, p. 48. Also see pp. 7-11. The Lund Reports, pp. 5, 11. Faith and Order Trends, No. 4, Sept. 1961, p. 1.

Order in 1960.[95] After another study on this document by the next working committee of the Commission at Spittal in Austria, in 1959, it was sent to a number of ecumenical study groups and theological faculties, inviting their comments for the further discussion at the forthcoming conference in 1960.[96]

In this working paper, "The Meaning of Baptism," the Commission endeavours to understand the meaning of baptism in close relation to the saving work of Jesus Christ in the wide context of the Heilsgeschichte which proceeds from Christ and is present in the Christian church. This new approach to the issue was gratefully acknowledged by many at the meeting of the full commission of Faith and Order at St. Andrews in Scotland, in 1960.[97] A whole session was devoted to a discussion on this basic document, "The Meaning of Baptism," at the World Conference of the Commission on Faith and Order of 1960; and it was recommended that it be published without alteration, except for such minor changes as were editorially necessary, for further study by churches.[98] It was published in the book entitled, One Lord, One Baptism in 1960. As already indicated, the presentation of this document is thoroughly Christological. The baptism of Jesus Christ, which is eschatological and universal, is the ground for the meaning of individual baptism. As "the baptism of Jesus meant that the one righteous One took upon himself the sin of the many and became one with them," (so) "our baptism means that we, the many, are incorporated into him and become one with him and in him."[99] The significance of baptism is primarily understood in terms of "incorporation" or "participation" in Christ Jesus, in his whole ministry - the whole movement of Heilsgeschichte. Thus baptism encompasses the whole Christian life, and "Baptism takes effect according as we die daily with Christ, die to sin, and as we daily rise with him, being daily renewed in the new life in Christ."[100] Yet "baptism is," the document asserts, "the work of God, his mighty work, not a work of ours."[101] In other words, "it is something done to us, not something that we ourselves do."[102] Baptism itself "effects" incorporation into Christ's Body.

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[95] FOC Paper #27 (Spittal, 1959), p. 16.

[96] See FOC Paper #27, pp. 12-17.

[97] FOC Paper #31, pp. 104-105. The document was again highly regarded as very fruitful example of approach, at the world conference of the Commission in 1963. (FOC Paper #41, p. 26).

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[98] In the general discussion at the conference, there were some questions and comments. But these were not included in the document. See FOC Paper #31, pp. 18, 49-60, 104-105. Also see Encounter 21: No. 3, for several key papers which led up to this document. Refer also to the "Theme on Baptism" drawn from the Lutheran-Reformed Consultation in Germany in 1959, which appeared in the Appendix III of FOC Paper #27, pp. 42-43.

[99] One Lord, One Baptism, p. 56.

[100] Ibid., p. 57. Yet it is to be administered once for all and unrepeatable because baptism is an eschatological act.

What, then, is the role of faith in baptism - the relation of faith to baptism? According to this study, baptismal faith is a "complex phenomenon," which is chiefly defined as "response to redemption made known in the gospel."[103] Therefore, this document claims that "It cannot be emphasized too strongly . . . that baptism and faith are inseparably linked in the New Testament, and understanding or practice which separates or obscures their connection is untrue to the New Testament."[104] The relation of faith and baptism must be defined in two different ways, depending on the recipient of baptism - infant or adult. In the case of adult baptism, "the presence of personal faith in the recipient of baptism is considered essential."[105] But when an infant is baptized, "the stress is laid upon corporate faith, upon an environment of faith."[106] Here it is the Christian community rather than the baptized person himself which affirms its faith in God, and pledges to provide such an environment of faith. Personal response of the recipient is deferred to a later time.[107] In short, we must remember three aspects in the event of baptism which need to be distinguished, yet to be held together:

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[101] Ibid., p. 56.

[102] Ibid., p. 57. "What happens in baptism is that my life is taken up into God's plan of salvation, the mighty movement of salvation-history, whereby it is carried along towards its eschatological fulfilment at the Parousia of Christ."

[103] Ibid., p. 62.

[104] Ibid., p. 63.

> the faithful action of God for mankind's redemption in Jesus Christ; the response in faith of the Church and of its individual members; and the personal decision of faith of the recipient of baptism (whether immediately connected with the rite of baptism or deferred to a later time).[108]

In this qualified understanding, "The various baptismal practices of the church, accordingly, must never be understood in isolation from faith."[109]

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[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid.

[107] The document says that if the fruits of baptism are to be known or to flourish in his life, the claim and promise of the gospel laid on the child in baptism must be owned or received by personal decision. In this sense, "the necessity of the baptized himself to believe is in no way diminished, far less removed." (Ibid., p. 63).

[108] Ibid., p. 64.

[109] Ibid.

This document is a profitable fruit of the research and consultations which have been in process for several years in ecumenical studies. Nevertheless, this did not close the discussion on the subject. This document was again discussed in the next triennial meeting of the Commission on Faith and Order at Montreal in Canada in 1963.[110] The World Conference of the Commission of 1963 again recommended that the continued attention by the commission should be given to the expression of the meaning of baptism in the life of the churches.[111] What is particularly impressive in the discussion on baptism in the ecumenical movement is the wide participation of so many churches and scholars represented in the dialogue as seen in the list of the members of the Commission. It is also impressive to see the wide area of agreement they show, despite such variety represented in the discussion groups. Have they, therefore, solved all problems about baptism? This is hardly the case, for problems are still in our hands for further study.

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[110] See FOC Paper #41, Section III & IV.

[111] *Ibid.*, p. 23. The conference realized that "all formulations of the theology of baptism remain human attempts to grasp conceptually what is ultimately the great mystery of God's grace." (*Ibid.*, p. 26).

The most controversial issue among them is, as the Commission frankly admitted,[112] the problem between those who practice only believer's baptism and those who practice also infant baptism. In the ecumenical discussion the "one baptism" with which they started was now challenged by some participants who insisted on describing two baptisms - the baptism of believers, and also infant baptism. Such problems would produce complications in a united church or a church which lacks homogeneity, because without theological solution on the meaning and practice of baptism, church union could involve a further confusion and spiritual loss.[113] Thus an important issue in the ecumenical encounter and conversation centers round the dispute over believer's baptism versus infant baptism.

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[112] Ibid., p. 26.

[113] A. L. Haddon, therefore, points out that in the development of church union, "the next step is to find a way of union between churches which practice infant baptism and those who have only believer's baptism." ("The Two Baptisms and Church Union," in Ecumenical Review, 12: p. 471).

C. THE RENEWED INTEREST IN BAPTISM AND JOHN WESLEY

Such revival of the interest in Christian baptism in recent years opens the possibility of a possible Methodist contribution to this study. However, the Methodist beliefs about baptism appear to have been various.[114] Therefore, while the subject of baptism has become increasingly important, the time seems ripe for clarification of the Methodist theology of baptism. But it is perhaps obvious that this task will not succeed unless one refers to, and clarifies the teaching on the subject in the theology of John Wesley. Therefore, the present writer believes with Brian J. N. Galliers that "this study (of baptism in Wesley's teaching) is the more relevant in the light of our present-day concern over the theology and practice of this sacrament within Methodism."[115]

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[114] J. E. Rattenbury says, "the Methodist beliefs about baptism have been always various. They certainly are today." He illustrates this: "I once heard baptism discussed at a gathering of eight or nine Wesleyan ministers, and there were eight or nine different doctrines pronounced at that meeting!" (Wesley's Legacy to the World, Nashville, Cokesbury Press, 1928, p. 193).

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse and clarify the teaching on baptism in the writings of John Wesley. Our procedure will be as follows: First, we briefly survey the rise of interest in the subject in Methodism, then current studies on John Wesley's theology on baptism and problems will be summarized. This will be discussed in chapter two. In chapters three and four, we will consider the background of Wesley's theology of baptism, namely, main influences which helped formulate his thought on the subject. And in chapters five and six we will summarize Wesley's doctrine of baptism, and discuss the problems with an attempt to clarify his theology of baptism, in the light of his own writings. Finally in the concluding chapter i.e., chapter seven, we will see how significantly Wesley's teaching stands in the contemporary scene, especially in a field of Christian missions, namely, Korea.

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[115] Proceedings of Wesley Historical Society (this will be cited from now on simply as Proc. W. H. S.), vol. 32 (1960), p. 121.

CHAPTER TWO

CURRENT STUDIES OF WESLEY'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM

A. RISE OF INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT IN METHODISM

Such renewed interest in Christian baptism in the ecumenical movement has been reflected in various church groups. The liturgical revival which has sprung in the church over the past few decades has also helped to promote a new interest and study concerning baptism, for baptism has a special place in this revival.[1] And in recent years baptism has become an important issue in many denominations.[2] Methodism is no exception.

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[1] Augustine Grail says, "one particularly significant example of the closely linked revivals of the liturgy and biblical studies can be seen in our present awareness of the richness of Christian baptism. The whole liturgical movement . . . is leading us, the Christians, to rediscover the meaning of the sacraments, which bring us to share in Christ's death and resurrection. It was only to be expected that baptism . . . should have a special place in this liturgical revival." (Baptism in the New Testament, A Symposium, by A. George and others, trans. David Askew (Baltimore, Helicon Press, 1964, p. 7). See also Gordon S. Wakefield, "The Movement of Liturgical Renewal," in London Quarterly and Holborn Review (1962), pp. 28ff.

In the Methodist church the question of baptism has in recent years drawn the attention of many, with the growing recognition of the movement of liturgical renewal. For example, the Conference of the British Methodist Church in 1961 decided that "the Faith and Order Committee investigate the desirability of, and procedures involved in, revising the Book of Offices."[3] For they felt that there has been criticism of theological deficiencies and liturgical ommissions in the Book of Offices. "The Office of Infant Baptism, for instance, is notoriously inadequate in its emphasis on the objectivity of divine grace and its declaration of Christian faith."[4] This indicates how a widespread interest in Christian baptism in recent years on the ecumenical scene has challenged Methodists to the evaluation of her own position on the subject.

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[2] For example, The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland set up, in 1953, a special commission for a new examination of the doctrine of baptism. This commission issued a first interim report in 1955 on the biblical teaching regarding baptism which was reissued in a revised and shortened form for use as a study document in 1958. And the second report was issued in 1956, the third, in 1957, and the fourth, in 1958.

Recently Baptist churches also began to take part in the theological controversies. A special commission on the doctrine of baptism was set up, in preparation for the Eighth Baptist World Congress. At the result, after the Congress, a statement and questionnaires were issued under the title, The Doctrine of Baptism (1951) by the Baptist World Alliance. Such denominational interest on the subject was also revealed in the publication of Christian Baptism edited by A. Gilmore.

Within the Church of England, a study on baptism has been going on in recent years. In 1942 a joint committee was set up to investigate the matter of baptism in relation to confirmation by the Convocations of Canterbury and York. The first interim report was issued with the title, Confirmation Today, in 1944, and the second, Baptism Today, in 1949, and the third, Baptism and Confirmation Today, in 1954. And in the light of these three reports, the Liturgical Commission of the Church of England has now drafted revised services of baptism - both infant and adult baptism. (cf. FOC Paper #27, p. 14).

[3] Gordon S. Wakefield, "The Movement of Liturgical Renewal," in London Quarterly and Hoborn Review (1962), p. 28.

Another factor has recently promoted the study on baptism among many Methodists: a conversation between the Church of England and the Methodist Church in Britain.[5] For the question of baptism, especially the meaning of infant baptism cannot ultimately escape from being an issue to be discussed.[6] Here it is obvious that during such conversations, the problem will not be discussed without referring to the views of John Wesley on the subject. Therefore, as already indicated in the previous section, we must go back to, and clarify Wesley's doctrine of baptism. In the section which follows, we shall briefly survey current studies on Wesley's teaching on baptism, and problems remaining therefrom.

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[4] Wakefield, Ibid.

[5] See Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church: An Interim Statement (London, S. P. C. K. and the Epworth Press, 1958). Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church: A Report to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Conference of the Methodist Church (London, Church information office and the Epworth Press, 1963). The Church of England and the Methodist Church: A Consideration of the Report, ed. J. I. Packer (Marcham, the Marcham Manor Press, 1963). The Anglican-Methodist Conversations: A Comment from Within, by Eric W. Kemp (London, Oxford University Press, 1964).

[6] For example, the question of the sacraments took one chapter in A Report to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Conference of the Methodist Church (1963); part II, chapter 4.

B. WESLEYAN STUDIES ON THE SUBJECT AND PROBLEMS

William Hordern in his article, "Recent Trends in Systematic Theology," says that "an important theological development in recent years has been the continuing progress made in rediscovering the Reformers . . . Inspired by the rediscovery of Luther and Calvin, a number of contemporary Methodists have been going back to rediscover John Wesley."[7] Many books have been written about John Wesley convering almost all areas of his theology.

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[7] Canadian Journal of Theology, vol. vii (1960), p. 86. Hordern also remarked that "it became evident that Wesley has suffered greatly from his admirers. It was raised on the assertion that Wesley had no theology and that he taught a religion of experience alone, but it is now evident that Wesley was a powerful theologian." (Ibid., p. 86-87).

Nevertheless it is very surprising that so little has been written about his theology of baptism.[8] Moreover, various Wesley scholars differ in interpreting the subject.[9] For example, James H. Rigg thinks that there was an inconsistency in Wesley's teaching on baptism. According to him, Wesley was in his early day characteristically a priest and held the idea of baptismal regeneration, but in his later day Wesley was a preacher, evangelist and must "have ceased to hold, or at least have come to doubt of, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration."[10] J. Ernest Rattenbury challenges Rigg's assumption that Wesley was not a high churchman after 1738. Rattenbury believes that

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[8] For an instance, in Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society which has been well known since 1897 as a periodical for the Wesley study, the subject has not been discussed at all until very recently. B. J. N. Galliers wrote the first article entitled "Baptism in the Writings of John Wesley," in vol. 32 (1960).

[9] This is another reason that we need further study of the subject, although some might simply presume that it is unnecessary since Wesley set forth his view in his "Treatise on Baptism," in 1756. (The Works of John Wesley, 3 ed. edited by Jackson, X, pp. 188ff).

[10] James H. Rigg, The Churchmanship of John Wesley and the Relations of Wesleyan Methodism to the Church of England (London, Wesleyan Conference Office, 1878), p. 43. cf. pp. 39-44.

"there is no greater mistake than to suppose that Wesley ceased to be high churchman after 1738."[11] According to him, Wesley was always a high churchman and sacramentalist of a comparatively high church type in his belief and practice. He, however, agreed with Rigg that Wesley's view on baptism has not been consistent.[12]

Concurring with them are John Bishop, Henry Wheeler, E. H. Sugden and W. F. Flemington who believe that Wesley modified his view concerning baptism in his later life, i.e., in 1784 when he revised the Sunday Service of the Methodists.[13] William R. Cannon also says that because Wesley wanted to harmonize his new emphasis with the baptismal doctrine of the Church of England, Wesley's writing on the subject was in much confusion.[14]

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[11] Rattenbury, Op. cit., p. 175.

[12] Ibid., p. 193.

[13] John Bishop, Methodist Worship (London, Epworth Press, 1950), pp. 113-115. Henry Wheeler, History and Exposition of the Twenty-five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church (New York, The Methodist Book Concern, 1908), pp. 301-302. E. H. Sugden, Wesley's Standard Sermons, vol. I (4 ed. London, Epworth Press, 1956), p. 282. W. F. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism, p. 140.

[14] William R. Cannon, Theology of John Wesley (New York, Abingdon Press, 1946), p. 126, pp. 127-128.

But Harald Lindström claims that although Wesley made certain changes in his 1784 abridgment of the Thirty-nine Articles, it does not mean that he relinquished his early tenet that through baptism the child is regenerated. Wesley, Lindström believes, undoubtedly retained this belief.[15] Franz Hildebrandt thinks that Wesley merely softened the hard edge of his former position, but he, according to Hildebrandt, retained the essential core of the sacramental interpretation of baptism as a definite means of grace.[16] Along with this view, Colin W. Williams claims that in Wesley's thought there was a unity, in holding the freedom and sovereignty of God and at the same time believing that "God's normal way is to work through established means, and that the Christian is expected to observe them."[17] In other words, according to Williams, although there was an inescapable tension in Wesley between the ecclesiastical and the evangelical, Wesley kept this tension to the end, yet he did not abandon the first because of the second emphasis. John Parris seems to have concurred in this view.[18] Umphrey Lee thinks that Wesley did not change his view in regarding baptism as a conferring of grace even in his later years, yet there is some indication that Wesley wavered as to baptismal regeneration.[19]

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[15] Harald Lindström, Wesley and Sanctification (London, Epworth Press, 1950), pp. 108-109.

[16] Franz Hildebrandt, From Luther to Wesley (London, Lutterworth Press, 1951), pp. 67-69.

[17] Colin W. Williams, John Wesley's Theology Today (New York, Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 118, also see pp. 115-122.

What, then, is the true picture of Wesley? Why have there been so many different interpretations among Wesleyans? Is it so because, as W. J. Sparrow Simpson thinks, Wesley's own theology of baptism was incomplete?[20] Or because Wesley was so vague in his teaching on baptism, as Leslie F. Church thinks?[21] Did Wesley not face the problem squarely as L. M. Starkey thinks?[22] Otherwise was Wesley's teaching dialectical in keeping a tension in his doctrine to the end, yet holding a unity at the same time? Virtually these questions seem to center round the question whether Wesley did change his view on baptism in his lifetime or not. Viewing these questions from a different angle, the problems center round the question as to what is the relation of baptism to regeneration in Wesley's thought. What is the relation of faith to baptism in Wesley's thought? What is the place of baptism in Wesley's soteriology - Justification, regeneration and sanctification, and also prevenient grace? These are problems that should be honestly faced and discussed.

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[18] John Parris, John Wesley's Doctrine of the Sacraments, pp. 54-61, especially pp. 59-61.

[19] Umphrey Lee, John Wesley and Modern Religion (New York and Nashville, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1936), pp. 249-250.

[20] W. J. Sparrow Simpson, John Wesley and the Church of England (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1934), p. 30.

[21] Leslie F. Church, More About the Early Methodist People (London, Epworth Press, 1949), p. 250. He wrote, "John Wesley was more vague in his teaching on baptism, especially infant baptism, than on any other subject."

[22] Lycurgus M. Starkey, The Work of the Holy Spirit: A Study in Wesleyan Theology (New York and Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1962) p. 92. "Yet he does not face the problem squarely."

PART TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
OF
WESLEY'S THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM

CHAPTER THREE

ANGLICAN BACKGROUND

In his early ministry John Wesley did not set forth his view of Christian baptism in writing. These early years,[1] however, cannot be dismissed, because in this period various influences helped to mold the doctrine of his later days. Generally speaking, the influences of one's childhood and youth, one's family and school life, contribute to the formation of one's thought in later years. At this point Wesley was no exception. Therefore, in part two (chapters three and four) we shall briefly consider the main influences which helped to formulate his theology of the sacraments, with special attention to baptism.

First of all, reference must be made to his youth at Epworth rectory. The influence of home education cannot be ignored. The attitude of Wesley's parents towards the sacraments affected his own sacramental understanding, such as was reflected in his life at Oxford and his ministry in Georgia. We shall consider, in this chapter, Wesley's parents' churchmanship and the sacramental practice of Wesley.

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[1] It might well be said that the real Methodist movement did not start until the United Societies were organized at "the latter end of the year 1739," (*Journal*, ii, 316n) although Wesley himself looked upon the Oxford Club as the beginning of the Methodist movement. Therefore, for the sake of convenience, we shall deal with these early years as a background of Wesley's theology.

Next to the Anglicanism of his upbringing the greatest influence on Wesley's life, according to John C. Bowmer, was that of the Moravians.[2] We shall consider, in chapter four, his contact with the Moravians as another main factor which helped to mold his thought. Thus we shall consider his evangelical experience in 1738, and his controversies with the Moravians. And finally we shall see how he synthesized these various factors in his view of the means of grace and the sacraments. Then we shall enter into the discussion of his writings on the subject in part three.

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[2] Bowmer thinks that the main influences which affected Wesley's formulation of the doctrine could be reduced to the two, namely his native Anglicanism and Continental pietism as it was found among the Moravians. See, John C. Bowmer, The Lord's Supper in Early Methodism (London, Dacre Press, 1951), pp. 58-59.

A. AT EPWORTH: THE CHURCHMANSHIP OF WESLEY'S PARENTS

The history of Wesley's Anglican heritage begins from his childhood at Epworth rectory where his father, Samuel Wesley, was rector for many years. Samuel Wesley, though brought up as a Dissenter, became an Anglican and entered Oxford to be trained for Holy Orders.[3] He became a very faithful clergyman of the Church of England, of the high church tradition. His high churchmanship was both political and ecclesiastical.[4] He carried on controversies with Dissenters largely on political grounds,[5] and he also insisted on the frequent and strict administration of the sacraments. He celebrated the Lord's Supper once a month, sometimes once a week.[6] This was much more frequent than the practice in most parishes in his century.[7] Samuel endeavored to educate people in a due regard for the sacraments and ordinances of the Church.

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[3] See, John S. Simon, John Wesley and the Religious Societies (London, The Epworth Press, 1921), pp. 48ff, for reasons for this change of his ecclesiastical views.

[4] As A Dictionary of English Church, ed. S. L. Ollard, indicates, there are varied interpretations of the term, "High Churchman." (pp. 114-115). "The term, 'High Churchman' is found first in a pamphlet (Good Advice) of 1687." It was applied to 'the ancienter members of' the English Church who have all along owned and contended for a strict conformity to her rules and sanctions," or those who never admit of the least alteration of the Established worship upon any pretence (p. 115). During the 18th century the term retained a political rather than an ecclesiastical meaning. But it is also true that an ecclesiastical meaning remained (p. 115). Early in the 19th century the term seems again to change its meaning. It was usually used for those who were Tory in politics and opposed to "ethusiasm" in religion. But from the Oxford movement in 1833, the term became used in an exclusively ecclesiastical sense. It became applied for those who maintain an emphasis upon the apostolic succession and in the importance of sacraments in the Christian life. (cf. pp. 114-115).

In 1700 he wrote a treatise, The Pious Communicant rightly prepared: or, a Discourse concerning the Blessed Sacrament: Wherein the Nature of it is Described, our

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[5] When he was put in Lincoln jail for debt the real motive was offense at his political activities, the Dissenters being among his opponents. In jail he wrote a letter to a friend, in which we see his sturdy royalist spirit. "Thanks be to God, for my confinement is very easy and comfortable to me, since I need not have suffered it if I would have deserted the cause of the University and the Church of England. I am now answering the Dissenters' last book against me, having but too much leisure; and will never drop the controversy unless I lay my bones here. God preserve the Church, whatever becomes of your most humble servant." (From an unpublished manuscript in the Methodist Archives, Epworth House, London, cited by Outler, John Wesley, New York, Oxford University Press, 1964, pp. 5-6).

[6] Luke Tyerman, The Life and Times of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, M. A. (London, Simpkin, Marshall & Co., Stationers' Hall Court, 1866), pp. 387 & 427.

[7] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 19.

Obligation to frequent communion Enforced, and Directions given for due Preparation for it, Behaviour at, and after it, and Profiting by it, With Prayers and Hymns, suited to the several Parts of that Holy Office. To Which is added, A Short Discourse of Baptism. In this treatise, Samuel aimed "to be as clear and methodical . . . both in the *Description* of the Nature of the Sacrament, . . . and in the *Direction* for our *Behaviour* in relation to the *Reception* of it."[8] His view of baptism is set forth in this treatise.

Samuel understood the sacraments as a divine instrument appointed by God as the means of aiding man to work out his salvation.[9] His view was in harmony with the Anglican interpretation.[10] He stated that his view on baptism is "the same which has been done before by the Right

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[8] Samuel Wesley, *The Pious Communicant rightly prepared*, . . . (London, 1700), Preface ii-iii.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 183. "The *Sacrament* is appointed for our *perfection* in *Grace*, as well as *conquest* over our Sins."

[10] For the Anglican view of baptism, we naturally turn to Article XXVII. But this must be read in close connection with Article XXV, and also with the Catechism and the Baptismal Office. The most typical characterization of the Anglican view of the sacraments seeks to express the middle way between Roman Catholic and Protestant extremes. It is well shown in the words of Dean Goode. "The matter is often spoken of as if the Church of England must of necessity have laid down, and had in fact laid down, a certain definite, precise view upon this subject, and peremptorily enjoined it upon all her ministers for their acceptance and belief. . . . It appears to me, after long and anxious consideration, that all which our Church has done upon this

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question is to lay down certain *limits* on both sides, within which the views of her ministers are to be confined." (*The Doctrine of the Church of England as to the Effects of Baptism in the Case of Infants*, chapter I, cited by T. P. Boultbee, *A Commentary on Thirty-nine Articles*, London, 1884, p. 228).

In point of fact, some extreme Protestant opinion regarded the sacraments as symbols of truths of the Gospel, yet symbols bearing no special divine promise that their use would impart saving grace. This led the Church of England to impose the limit as to the sacraments in general (Article XXV) and baptism in particular (Article XXVII). The Articles read that the sacraments are "not only badges and tokens" but rather "effectual signs of grace by which God doth work invisibly in us." "Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference . . . but it is also a sign of Regeneration or new Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church" (Article XXVII).

The other extreme is the full doctrine of *ex opere operato*, upon which the Church of England imposes the following limit, "And in such only as worthily receive the same (Sacraments) they have a wholesome effect or operation" (Article XXV). In baptism, "Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God" (Article XXVII). (See E. J. Bicknell, *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England*, London, Longmans and Green and Co., 1963, pp. 373-374).

But within the limits imposed by the Church, there was room for considerable freedom of interpreting for the meaning of baptism in the classical Anglican period. And such variation was not forbidden. (Boultbee, *Op. cit.*, pp. 236-238). This difference in question was based on how literally the expressions in the Catechism and the Baptismal service are taken.

Some tended to take these expressions as absolutely fulfilled in baptism, and these stand more or less close to the Tridentine *ex opere operato* view of the sacrament. On the other hand, some tended to take these expressions not absolutely but "hypothetically in the language of faith, which assumes the implied conditions to be present, and thereupon pronounces the fulfillment of the Gospel covenant of grace to the person baptized." (Boultbee, *Op. cit.*, p. 230). But there was another group generally known as moderate high churchmen. They held that in the

Reverend and Pious Bishop of Ely, . . . and by others who have laboured on the same Subject."[11] He believed that the first fruit of the benefits of baptism is "the washing away the damning Guilt of original sin,"[12] and that the child is "by the Laver of Regeneration in Baptism, received into the Number of God's Children."[13] That is to say, he believed a real doctrine of baptismal regeneration. He writes, "By Water then, as a means, the Water of Baptism, we are regenerated, or born again, whence it is called the washing

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case of infant baptism, the covenanted grace is conferred. "For they allege that unbelief and impenitence alone can bar the flow of covenant grace. Accordingly an impenitent adult is able to resist . . . the reception of grace; but an unconscious infant cannot do so, and in such an one Baptism fulfils its entire purpose." (Ibid.) In other words, they conceive that in such case the baptismal grace is "invariably implanted at Baptism which may or may not afterwards become developed and bear fruit." (Boultbee, Ibid., p. 231). That is, in baptism, the soul was brought into direct and convenanted connection with the Holy Spirit. "The grace of the Spirit will plead with the soul as the reason opens, and will ultimately sanctify it, if 'that grace be not stifled, disregarded, or abused." (Ibid.) Thus the objectiveness in baptism was emphasized. Samuel Wesley's view of baptism appears to concur with this moderate high churchman's view.

[11] Samuel Wesley, Op. cit., Preface iv-v.

[12] Ibid., p. 197.

[13] Ibid., p. 201.

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of Regeneration."[14] Yet, at the same time, it appears that he did not accept the doctrine approximating the Roman position. He qualifies the definition:

> We say not that *Regeneration* is always *compleated*, but that it is *begun* in it: a *Principle* of *Grace* is infused, which we lost by the *Fall*, which shall never be wholly withdrawn, unless we *quench* God's *Holy Spirit* by obstinate *habits* of *Wickedness*: . . . A Christian Life is *progressive*, as is our *natural life*; and tho' the *Seeds* of *Grace*, should like the *reasonable Soul*, the *Principle* of *Life*, and of all *Action*, be infused in a Moment, yet there requires *time* to produce *strong* habits of *Grace*, as well as of *Reason*.[15]

To put it in another way,

> *Christians* are in *Baptism* Sacramentally *washed*, *sanctified*, and *justified* in the name of our *Lord Jesus*, and by the *Spirit of God*. Nor will this *Holy Spirit* even leave us, but *strive* with us to *perfect* what is now *begun*, unless we finally *leave* him, and *forfeit* his *Protection*, by *neglecting* to perform our *Engagements* in *Baptism*.[16]

Such a view of Samuel Wesley on baptism is echoed, as we shall consider in details later, in John's "A Treatise on

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[14] *Ibid*., pp. 204-205.

[15] *Ibid*., p. 205.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 207.

Baptism" written in 1756.

Samuel Wesley was also a man of discipline. His observation of regulations was very strict. His ideal never compromised with the desires of his parishioners. He, therefore, had to fight a great struggle with his people.[17] For example, he insisted that children should have a public baptism in the church, while parents often wished that the baptism be administered in the home, as was indeed allowed by the Prayer Book in exceptional cases. The result was that many newborn babies died without being baptized.[18] His Holy Communion discipline was so strict that "Scarce twenty, out of a good thousand, saw fit to take part in the Lord's Supper and receive communion."[19] He conducted the public service of the church with solemnity. He had a high respect for liturgy. "To him, 'reading prayers' was a religious privilege and Divine duty to be solemnly enjoyed and performed."[20] His administration of discipline was also exceedingly strict, and sometimes it was severe. The cup of the Lord was withheld from those who outraged morality and did not make some amends as demanded by his discipline. Sometimes he made the penitents stand before the congregation in the church, without shoes or stockings, barehead covered with a white sheet, to be seen by the people.[21]

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[17] Tyerman, Op. cit., p. 387.

[18] M. Piette, John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism (New York, Sheed and Ward, 1937), p. 217.

[19] Ibid.

[20] John Kirk, The Mother of the Wesleys (Cincinnati, Poe and Hitchcock, 1867), pp. 148-149.

These are sufficient to convey some idea as to what type of churchman Samuel was. In such strict pastoral discipline he could not remain at peace with his parishioners. There arose the mutterings of dislike among his people, and finally public hostility opened against the rector.[22] But Samuel, in spite of this, endured it without bitterness. There, John probably learnt already how to suffer for the sake of discipline.[23]

Along with this, we must mention the education of John Wesley's mother, Susanna. Her devout piety and rigid practice of discipline was a potent factor in the spiritual development of her son.[24] Susanna practiced a high church type of piety, and she have herself up with a great devotion to the education of her children.[25] Her method of education was very "methodist." Her children were to live according to an order of that day which she had drawn up. The principal rules which she observed in her education may be seen in one of her letters.

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[21] Ibid., pp. 146ff.

[22] cf. V. H. H. Green, The Young Mr. Wesley (New York, St. Martin's Press Inc., 1961), pp. 46-47. Piette, Op. cit., p. 218. Kirk, Op. cit., pp. 115-116.

[23] John Wesley faced very similar difficulty with the settlers in Georgia, as his father did with his parishioners at Epworth. See, Tyerman, Op. cit., pp. 414-415. Piette, Op. cit., pp. 216-218.

> The children were always put into a regular method of living, in such things as they were capable of, from their birth: as in dressing, undressing, changing their linen, &c. The first quarter commonly passes in sleep. After that they were, if possible, laid into their cradles awake, and rocked to sleep; and so they were kept rocking till it was time for them to awake. This was done to bring them to a regular course of

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[24] Kirk says, "No one can study the life of John Wesley without observing that maternal influence exerted over him an all but sovereign control." (Kirk, Op. cit., p. 323) Green thinks that his mother's thorough home training is "the first importance in John Wesley's development." (Green, Op. cit., pp. 53-54).

[25] Susanna herself admits that "no one could observe her method without renouncing the world in the most literal sense . . . She says, 'There are few, if any, that would entirely devote above twenty years of the prime of life in hopes to save the souls of their children, which they think may be saved without so much ado; for that was my principal intention, however unskilfully and unsuccessfully managed.'" (John S. Simon, Op. cit., p. 58, See Eliza Clarke, Susanna Wesley (2nd ed. London, W. H. Allen & Co., 1890), p. 30f.

> sleeping; which at first was three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon; afterwards two hours, till they needed none at all. . . . The children of this family were taught, as soon as they could speak, the Lord's prayer, which they were made to say at rising and bed-time constantly; to which, as they grew bigger, were added a short prayer for their parents, and some collects; a short catechism, and some portions of Scripture, as their memories could bear. They were very early made to distinguish the Sabbath from other days, before they could well speak or go. They were as soon taught to be still at family prayers, and to ask a blessing immediately after, which they used to do by signs, before they could kneel or speak.[26]

Under such strict discipline Wesley was taught how to regard the Bible and ordinances of the Church. After the alarming incident of the fire from which John was rescued,[27] his mother's attention was especially concentrated on John. When he was eight years old, Susanna mentioned John in one of her private meditations "in a manner that shews how much her heart was engaged in forming his mind for religion."[28]

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[26] This letter was addressed to her son John, dated July 24, 1732. Wesley,kept it in his Journal at her death. See Journal, iii, 34-38.

[27] See John S. Simon, Op. cit., p. 60.

[28] Henry Moore, The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M. (London, 1824), vol. i, p. 116.

> I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that thou has so mercifully provided for, than even I have been; that I may do my endeavour to instil into his mind the principles of thy true religion, and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success.[29]

John, according to Fitchett, began his practice, which he afterwards continued, of reading twenty chapters every day in the Bible, already when he was about five or six years old,[30] and he was prepared to take the Holy Communion to which he was first admitted at the age of eight.

Through such well disciplined education of Susanna, the high church heritage of the Epworth rectory laid the foundation upon which much of John's thought and practice were to be built. It seems to be very natural for us to assume that the child Wesley's religion was that of "the High Churchman, resolved into a machinery of external rules and maintained by external discipline; of the legalist."[31]

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[29] Susanna's meditation on "Evening, May 17, 1711 - son John." cited by Moore, Ibid., p. 116.

[30] W. H. Fitchett, Wesley and His Century (New York, Cincinnati, The Abingdon Press, reprinted in 1912), p. 60.

[31] Ibid., p. 58.

And Wesley simply then believed that his sins were washed away in his infant baptism, and that he "could only be saved 'by universal obedience, by keeping all the commandments of God'."[32]

In the section which follows we shall see how Wesley's parents' high church attitude toward the sacraments was reflected in Wesley's Oxford life.

B. AT OXFORD: THE HOLY CLUB

Wesley went up to Charterhouse in London in 1714, and was matriculated as a student of Christ Church, Oxford, in 1720. He was elected as a fellow of Lincoln College in 1726, and he received the degree of M.A. in 1727. It was here at Oxford that Wesley decided to enter into the ministry and set himself for a thorough preparation for it.[33] Wesley was ordained deacon by Bishop Potter of Oxford on September 19, 1725, and priest on September 22, 1728, by the same Bishop. He served as his father's curate at Wroot and Epworth on two separate occasions in 1726 and 1729. In 1729 he returned to Oxford where the Holy Club was ready for his leadership.

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[32] Journal, i, 465.

[33] At this period of preparation, three writers influenced him profoundly. They were Jeremy Taylor, Thomas à Kempis, and William Law. See Works, xi, 366-367.

After his ordination, Wesley regularly attended at the Lord's Supper, at least once a week,[34] although in his earlier days he contented to receive communion three times a year.[35] He observed the regular Wednesday and Friday fasts.[36] He began to set apart Saturday evening for personal devotion and self-examination.[37] These things were an integral part of the life in the Holy Club in which Wesley himself gave remarkable leadership. The Holy Club was "a small semimonastic group" which gathered for Bible study, frequent communion, and methodical discipline in devotion.[38] They "prided themselves on their strict adherence to all the rules and rubrics of the Church."[39]

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[34] Journal, i, 467. Works, xiii, 304.

[35] Journal, i, 466.

[36] Ibid., 468. Works, xiii, 304.

[37] Works, xiii, 304.

[38] Outler, Op. cit., p. 8. Wesley gives the account of its rise in his "A Short History of Methodism," Works, viii, p. 348.

[39] R. Denny Urlin, The Churchman's Life of Wesley (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1880), p. 17.

Bowmer tells us that "the Holy Club revived a frequency of Communion which was unknown in Oxford at this time."[40] They observed the Lord's Supper regularly at a frequency far in excess of the current practice in the Church of England. Because of this, they were nicknamed by some "Sacramentarians."[41] Certainly Wesley believed that "it is the duty of every Christian to receive the Lord's Supper as often as he can."[42]

During Wesley's stay in Oxford, there came into his life another influence, the religious practice of the Nonjurors. The Nonjurors were those who "scrupled to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, in 1689, on the ground that they were still bound by their former oath to James II, 'his heirs and lawful successors'."[43] And they were considered by their admirers to be High Churchman of the finest type.[44] According to Simon, there were three classes in the Nonjurors. The first group consisted of those who were loyal to the Church of England, confining themselves to a formal protest, but not taking oath to William and Mary. They refused to pray for the king by name, but "they accepted heartily the Book of Common Prayer."[45] The second class was a strict group who organized themselves as a church. They took as its basis an earlier version of the Prayer Book - "First Prayer Book of Edward VI" which was outlawed in 1552.[46] They sought to revive four usages of the Edwardian Prayer Book, that is, "mixing water with wine at the Sacrament; prayer for the dead; the prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit on the sacramental elements; and the oblatory prayer, which implied that the Eucharist is 'the Christian Sacrifice'."[47] The third group sprang from the second and formed themselves into a separate church. Their leader was Thomas Deacon who acted as bishop in Manchester. Deacon built up his ecclesiastical and liturgical practice which were probably "taken from the Apostolic Constitutions, the Ancient Liturgies, and the Common Prayer Book of the Church of England."[48] Deacon was a close friend of John Clayton who joined the Holy Club in 1732.

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[40] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 24.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Wesley's sermon on "The Duty of Constant Communion," first published in 1733 and reissued in 1788. Works, vii, 148.

[43] S. L. Ollard ed., A Dictionary of English Church History (London, A. R. Mowbray and Co., 1912), p. 410.

[44] Ibid., p. 411. Simon, Op. cit., p. 52.

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[45] Simon, Op. cit., p. 99.

[46] For the Book of Common Prayer and the Nonjurors, see Proctor and Frere ed., A New History of the Book of Common Prayer (London, Macmillan & Co., 1941), pp. 225-227.

[47] Simon, Op. cit., p. 100.

It was through John Clayton that Wesley was introduced to the religious practice of the Nonjurors.[49] The Nonjurors' admiration for the early church impressed Wesley very much. Under their influence, the tendency in Wesley to observe the practice of the early church was much strengthened, and he became more ritualistic.[50] Hitherto for Wesley the Bible had been the only rule of faith and practice.[51] But now he began to study ancient literature, especially the Apostolic Constitutions and Ecclesiastical Canons, which Deacon considered "occupied a supreme place as authoritative on the organization and worship of the Church in the apostolic age."[52] Now Wesley discovered what he thereafter regarded as the normative pattern of catholic Christianity, in the thought and piety of the early church.[53] Thus, Wesley was becoming a ritualistic high churchman, following the early church pattern.

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[48] Luke Tyerman, The Oxford Methodists (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1873), p. 36n.

[49] Clayton was born as a son of William Clayton in Manchester in 1709. He went to Brazenose College. He was a man of extensive reading and of energy. (Tyerman, Oxford Methodists, p. 40). Being a close friend of Deacon, he was successful in his ministerial and practical office. It was in the year, 1732 that he was introduced to Wesley. His friendship with the Wesley brothers was unbroken until Wesley departed from the church usages, and became an outdoor evangelist. (Tyerman, Ibid., p. 42).

[50] A. B. Lawson, Wesley and the Christian Ministry (London, S. P. C. K., 1963), p. 8.

[51] Works, xi, 367.

In short, the Oxford Methodists were, as Wesley himself stated, "High Churchmen in the strongest sense; vehemently contending for every 'circumstance' of Church order, according to the old 'model'."[54]

Wesley's high view of the sacrament was already evident before the Holy Club was formed. In his letter to his mother dated June 18, 1725, Wesley, commenting on Jeremy Taylor's view,[55] expressed his own view on the benefit of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He writes,

> I imagined that when I communicated worthily, i.e., with faith, humility, and thankfulness, my preceding sins were *ipso facto* forgiven me. I mean, so forgiven that, unless I fell into them again, I might be secure of their ever rising in judgment against me at least in the other world.[56]

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[52] Simon, *Op. cit.*, p. 102.

[53] Outler, *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

[54] *Works*, viii, 507, see *Letters*, iv, 27-28.

[55] cf. *Letters*, i, 19-20.

[56] *Letters*, i, 20.

According to this passage Wesley, in harmony with his parents, believes that the Lord's Supper is a means of grace which affects the forgiveness of sin in a worthy communicant.[57] Such a view is again expressed in his sermon, "The Duty of Constant Communion," published in 1733.[58] In this sermon, he said that the benefits of Communion are "the forgiveness of past sins" and "the present strengthening and refreshing of our souls."[59] Therefore, the Lord's Supper is "the food of our soul: This gives strength to perform our duty, and leads us on to perfection."[60] Wesley regarded baptism also as a means of grace, and believed that in baptism God washed away man's sins. He writes in his "A Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day in the Week," published in 1733,[61]

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[57] To Wesley's question, his mother wrote back on Feb. 21, 1732 to which Wesley agreed. He wrote on Feb. 28, 1732, "Dear Mother, . . . One consideration is enough to make me assent to . . . your judgment concerning the Holy Sacrament . . ." (Letters, i, 118).

[58] Works, vii, 147ff.

[59] Ibid., 148.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Wesley said that "this was the first venture to print anything." (Journal, i, 117). For the text, see Works, xi, 203ff.

> I magnify thee for granting me to be born in thy Church and of religious parents; for washing me in thy Baptism . . .[62]

Wesley's understanding of the nature of the sacrament, as Parris says, is "very much in line with the general Anglican belief of his time."[63] Certainly "he was at all times true to the doctrine of the Sacrament contained in the Book of Common Prayer."[64] This is echoed in Wesley's own account of the characteristics of the Oxford Methodists. He writes,

> They were all zealous members of the Church of England; not only tenacious of all her doctrines, so far as they knew them, but of all her discipline, to the minutest circumstance. One thing then advanced against them was . . . In particular, that they laid too much stress upon the Rubrics and Canons of the Church.[65]

Under the influence of the Nonjurors, Wesley's admiration for, and interest in, the ancient Christian literature and practices was strengthened, and antiquity became an authority for Wesley's theology.[66] Therefore, we may conclude that during these Oxford years Wesley was "a punctilious performer of the demands both of his own Church and what he believed to be those of early Christianity as well as an earnest seeker after righteousness."[67]

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[62] Works, xi, 207.

[63] John Parris, Op. cit., p. 30.

[64] Simon, Op. cit., p. 103.

[65] Works, viii, p. 348.

In order to complete our survey of punctilious adherence to the sacramental discipline and rubrics of the Church in Wesley's life, now we turn to his ministry in Georgia.

C. IN GEORGIA: OXFORD METHODISM ON A MISSION FIELD

In 1735, three month's after his father's death,[68] John Wesley was invited "to transfer the Holy Club to Georgia, as missionaries to the Indians and the colonists."[69] On the fourteenth of October, 1735, Wesley went on board the Simmonds with three other members of the Holy Club, to embark for Georgia as a missionary.[70]

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[66] Such tendency in Wesley during his stay at Oxford is well expressed in his own review of his past life in general, in his Journal on Jan., 1738. See Journal, i, 419.

[67] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 29.

[68] Samuel Wesley died on April 25, 1735.

[69] Outler, Op. cit., p. 11.

Wesley immediately regarded the ship as his parish, and made himself acquainted with the people on board.[71] It was the very Holy Club on board, although it was impossible to muster the entire group of the Club for the missionary venture.[72] For the "Methodists" on board continued their disciplined religious activities on the ship under the leadership of Wesley. Stevens tells us an aspect of their daily course, giving a digest of Wesley's journal:

> from four to five o'clock in the morning, each of them spent in private prayer; from five till seven they read the Bible together, carefully comparing it with the writings of the earliest Christian ages; at seven they breakfasted; at eight were the public prayers. From nine to twelve Wesley usually studied German, and Delamotte Greek, while Charles Wesley wrote sermons, and Ingham instructed the children. At twelve they met to give an

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[70] Wesley embarked as a missionary of "the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel," and those who accompanied him were his brother Charles, Benjamin Ingham, and Charles Delamotte. (Journal, i, 106-107).

[71] There were 124 persons on board, including 26 German Moravians with their bishop, David Nitchman. These Moravians were the second group to emigrate to Georgia. Simon, Op. cit., p. 115.

[72] Bowmer says that ". . . in fact, the voyage to Georgia was simply the Holy Club on board ship." (Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 31).

> account of what each had done since their last meeting, and of what they designed to do before the next. About one they dined; the time from dinner to four was spent in reading to persons on board, a number of whom each of them had taken in charge. At four were the evening prayers, when either the second lesson of the day was explained - as the first always was in the morning - or the children were catechised and instructed before the congregation. From five to six they again retired for private prayer. From six to seven Wesley read in his state-room to two or three of the passengers, and each of his brethren to a few more in theirs; at seven he joined the Germans in their public service, while Ingham was reading between decks to as many as desired to hear. At eight they met again to exhort and instruct one another. Between nine and ten they went to bed, where says Wesley, neither the roaring of the sea, nor the motion of the ship, could take away the refreshing sleep which God gave them.[73]

During the voyage to Georgia, Wesley also secured much time for reading. His reading reflects his interests in the Nonjurors. The books were, with minor exceptions, all devotional and liturgical in content. According to his Diary interpreted by Curnock, there were about twenty books which Wesley read on his voyage.[74] "Five of these writers were

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[73] Abel Stevens, History of Methodism (New York, Philips and Hunt, 1858), vol. i, p. 78.

[74] Journal, i. 106-165. For the list of books, see

Nonjuror, three were Roman Catholic, the others (with the exception of the German books) tended to the views of the Anglo-Catholic school."[75] Here are some records of his Diary edited by Curnock.

> Oct. 25, Sat. (1735) - His reading this morning, at five o'clock, is the 'Bible, and at six and seven 'Deacon and Common Prayer.'[76]
>
> Sun. 26. - For every morning reading, Nelson took the place of Deacon.[77]
>
> Mon. 24 (November, 1735) - . . . He studies German . . . The books read privately or publicly during these days are Wall *On Baptism*, *Nicodemus*, Law's *Christian Perfection*, Johnson's *Unbloody Sacrifice*, and the *Life of Gregory Lopez*.[78]

A. W. Harrison, "Wesley's Reading during the voyage to Georgia," Proc. W. H. S. xiii, p. 25-26. cf. Martin Schmidt, *John Wesley*, trans. N. P. Goldhawk (London, Epworth Press, 1962), pp. 140ff.

[75] Proc. W. H. S., xiii. p. 26. cf. Frank Baker, "Wesley's Puritan Ancestry," *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* (1962), p. 184.

[76] 'Deacon' is Thomas Deacon who was a leader of the Nonjurors and was introduced to Wesley through John Clayton, one of the fellow Methodists. *Journal*, i, 114. See above p. 67.

[77] *Journal*, i, 114. Robert Nelson was one of earliest Nonjurors who was a friend of Wesley's father, Samuel Wesley. (Bowmer, *Op. cit.*, p. 26f).

[78] *Journal*, i, 123-124. William Wall, *History of Infant Baptism*; August H. Franke, *Nicodemus*, and *The Life of Gregory Lopez*; John Johnson, *Unbloody Sacrifice*.

Wesley administered the Lord's Supper daily both privately and in public among Methodists on board. Soon he instituted a weekly celebration of the Holy Communion in public for those on board.[79] Certainly it was "a novel mixture of the Oxford 'Holy Club' and Epworth Rectory."[80] For example, Ambrosius Tackner, his German tutor on board had received only lay baptism before. This did not satisfy Wesley. Therefore Wesley baptized him "at his desire."[81] These things are sufficient to illustrate how Wesley was in these days under the influence of the Nonjurors.

Wesley landed in Savannah on February 6, 1736. Now his parish was a strange land. But the procedure of his life, as well as his attitude towards the sacraments, were much the same as they had been. In his new parish, "Wesley ordered all his church life, his administration of the Sacraments, his daily devotions, public and private, his weekly fasts, his observance of Sunday and other holy days, according to what he believed to be the custom of the early church."[82] At the first meeting in Savannah, he

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[79] Tyerman, Oxford Methodists, pp. 68-69.

[80] A. B. Lawson, Op. cit., p. 11.

[81] Journal, i, 111. Wesley probably thought that "The sacrament of baptism had to rank on an equality with that of the Lord's Supper, insomuch that it was only valid when administered by an ordained minister." (A. B. Lawson, Op. cit., p. 12).

[82] Journal, i, 167n.

"announced his design to administer the sacrament on every Sunday and every holiday."[83] He kept Church festivals such as St. Batholomew's Day, St. Andrew's Day, the Conversion of St. Paul, the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Annuciation, besides the major holidays like Christmas and Easter.[84] And the public prayers were divided, according to the original appointment of the Church as envisaged by "The First Prayer Book of Edward VI:"[85] "The morning service began at five; the Communion Office (with the Sermon), at eleven; the evening service, about three."[86]

Wesley insisted on baptism by immersion "according to the custom of the first church and the rule of the Church of England."[87] In Savannah he baptized a child by immersion even though the child was eleven days old and was ill.[88] And if parents of a child did not consent to this form, he refused to baptize him at all.[89] Furthermore,

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[83] Luke Tyerman,, The Life and Times of the Reverend John Wesley (New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1872), vol. i, p. 127.

[84] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 33.

[85] Journal, i, 212n.

[86] Journal, i, 212-213.

[87] Ibid., 211. cf. Fitchett, Op. cit., p. 104.

[88] Journal, i, 167.

[89] Ibid., 211. cf. 210n.

Wesley insisted on "rebaptism" of Dissenters, because he still believed that the only valid baptism was that by an episcopally ordained priest.[90] Otherwise he refused the Lord's Supper to them, although lay baptism in emergency was undoubtedly recognized as valid by the church of his day.[91] He did not allow even a saintly Moravian pastor, Baltzius, to the Holy Communion on that ground.[92] Wesley naturally regarded baptism as the necessary qualification for the admission to the Holy Communion. While he was so exact in his obedience to all rubrics of the Church of England, he was lenient on the necessity of confirmation as a prerequisite for it. John Parris thinks that this was an outcome of his admiration and appeal to the custom of the ancient church under the influence of the Nonjurors.[93] These things also indicate "how completely the ecclesiastic and the sacerdotalist were dominant in Wesley" in those days.[94] In applying his understanding of the rules of the church, Wesley was so strict that he often appeared to be following the custom which was favoured by the Nonjurors rather than that accepted by the established church.

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[90] We already mentioned that Wesley rebaptized A. Tackner on his voyage to Georgia. (Journal, i, 111). See also Journal, i, 40. Tyerman, The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, vol. i, p. 147.

[91] Simon, Op. cit., p. 117.

[92] Journal, i, 370.

[93] Parris, Op. cit., p. 26. But Simon thinks that Wesley would, to some extent, have appealed to such practice of the day in the Church. For he thinks that "the neglect of the rite of confirmation throughout England at that time was general." (Simon, Op. cit., p. 118). In addition, it would be impossible for his devout parishioners to be confirmed as there was no bishop in America.

Wesley was a strict disciplinarian. He tried to enforce the discipline of the Oxford Methodists among the settlers in Georgia. He seemed to have inherited a stern fidelity to duty from his father. Like him, Wesley was not deterred from carrying out his ideals if extreme measures were called for, even to the extent of excommunication. He spared neither himself nor others for the sake of discipline. His repelling of Mrs. Williamson from the Holy Communion was a good example.[95] Here, as Bowmer thinks, "he was really pressing discipline to the point where it caused offense and broke under the strain."[96]

Such a ministry in Georgia lasted only eighteen months. Oxford Methodism was too severe for those who lived in Georgia, and Wesley's ministry seemed a failure.[97]

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[94] Fitchett, Op. cit., p. 104.

[95] See Journal, i, 376ff. 385ff. iv, 329. Letters, i, 226. Its details can easily be read in the most of biographies of John Wesley.

[96] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 33.

[97] Tyerman, The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, vol. i, p. 169.

Nevertheless, we must remember that his life in Georgia had a positive value in Wesley's theological development. We have noted that his interest in the customs and rules of the early church was already very much strengthened under the influence of the Nonjurors when he was at Oxford. On his voyage to Georgia he was still keeping in mental accord with the Nonjurors through reading, and also practicing the rules and discipline of the Oxford Methodists which were already influenced by the Nonjurors. Therefore, as Wesley came to his new parish, "he was endeavouring to set up a colony where these principles could be put into operation. He was trying to do in Georgia what he was unable to do in Oxford."[98] In fact, he tried his hand "at liturgical experimentation" with his study of the early Christian worship.[99] According to his Diary edited by Curnock, he endeavored to revise the Book of Common Prayer,[100] though how much we do not exactly know. The editor of the Diary, Curnock, thinks that the revision of this book did not go farther than "the slight alterations incident to changes in the royal family and to the circumstances in which he found himself."[101] And "he may have marked the book according to that scheme of daily prayers which he instituted in Savannah, on the authority of the early Church."[102] However, Frederick Hunter thinks that the revision went further with his intention to bring it into harmony with the First Prayer Book of Edward VI, after the ideas of the Nonjurors.[103] Nevertheless, it is sufficient to say that Wesley tried to hammer his liturgical ideas into the final form.[104] We notice that such innovations became one of the grounds of charges made by the parishioners against Wesley in the magistrates' court. Among twelve charges against Wesley eight were related to liturgical or ecclesiastical affairs.[105]

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[98] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 35. See F. Hunter, "The Manchester Nonjurors and Wesley's High Churchism," London Quarterly and Holborn Review (1947), p. 57.

[99] Outler, Op. cit., p. 12.

[100] Journal, i, 175.

So, in concluding this chapter, we may be safe to say with Telford that "At Oxford and Georgia, he was undoubtedly a stiff High Churchman."[106] Yet his high churchmanship was one which was primarily concerned with proper reverence for the sacraments of the church and with discipline. From the days at Epworth, through his formative period at Oxford, and in Georgia, Wesley was consciously a churchman. What he was taught by his parents at home was appropriated as his own, while his stay in Oxford Methodism was under the influence of the Nonjurors. It is to be remembered that what he retained in his Oxford days became the very warp and woof of his beliefs and practice of the sacraments in his whole life, as we shall see later.[107] In Georgia, Oxford Methodism was put on trial. That is to say, Wesley had an opportunity to put his beliefs and ideals into operation. His churchmanship became characterized as "a High Churchman of the early church type."[108] In other words, "the main feature of Wesley's churchmanship lies in his appeal to the primitive church. Again and again he bases his practices on this source."[109] Wesley was as conscious of being a Churchman in Georgia as he was in Oxford. He states, "And in Georgia too, we were rigorous observers of every Rubric and Canon; as well as (to the best of our knowledge) every tenet of the Church."[110]

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[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid. cf. Journal, i, 212-213.

[103] F. Hunter, loc. cit. London Quarterly and Holborn Review (1947), p. 58.

[104] Outler, Op. cit., p. 12.

[105] See Journal, i, 385-386, 234.

[106] John Telford, The Life of John Wesley (London, Charles H. Kelly, n.d.), p. 302.

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[107] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 29.

[108] Journal, i, 167n.

[109] Parris, Op. cit., p. 29. See Journal, i, 419. Wesley writes of his life in these days as follows in his journal: "Nor was it long before I bent the bow too far the other way; 1. By making antiquity a co-ordinate rather than subordinate rule with scripture. 2. By admitting several doubtful writings as undoubted evidences of antiquity. 3. By extending antiquity too far, even to the middle or end of the fourth century. 4. By believing more practices to have been universal in the ancient church than ever were so. . . . (Journal, i, 419)."

His disciplinarian life of high churchmanship was begun at home under the "methodical" education of his parents. Through his semimonastic life in the Holy Club at Oxford and his experience in Georgia, Wesley was chastened and became a wiser man. Therefore, although his effort at Oxford and the mission in Georgia may be said to be comparatively failures, yet we must admit that these years served a purpose both in the training of Wesley and in formulating his theology.

His ministry in Georgia provided something else of great importance in the formation of his theology. This was his contact with the Moravians during this period. This will be considered in the following chapter.

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[110] *Works*, viii, 507.

CHAPTER FOUR

WESLEY'S CONTACT WITH THE MORAVIANS

A. THE MORAVIAN CONTRIBUTION

John Wesley returned from Georgia to England in January, 1738. His reputation was damaged, his future was uncertain, and "His religion, with its passionate zeal, its heroic intensity, its unsparing self-sacrifice, yet gave neither peace to his own heart nor power to reach the hearts of others."[1] Such analysis of Wesley's spiritual state on his return from Georgia is reflected in his Journal:

> I went to America, to convert the Indians; but Oh, who shall convert me? Who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near. But let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled . . . Oh, who will deliver me from this fear of death? What shall I do? Where shall I fly from it?[2]

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[1] Fitchett, *Op. cit.*, p. 113.

[2] *Journal*, i, 418. See also 418-424. Cf. 432, 435 (Feb. 3, 1738).

At this change of Wesley's mood, we notice significance in his contact with the Moravians. A result of his mission to Georgia was his relation to the Moravian pietists. He met them first on his voyage to Georgia, and later among the settlers in Georgia.

Wesley was greatly impressed by the serious behavior, humility, longsuffering and patience of the Moravians. Especially was he impressed by their courage and complete freedom from fear.[3] In his fellowship with them in Georgia, Wesley saw the simple and deep dedication of a Moravian clergyman,[4] and the primitive simplicity, and also the demonstration of the Spirit in their church.[5] Wesley also saw the cheerfulness, peace and good humor with which they lived with one another,[6] and the confidence and calm with which they faced death.[7] Wesley "did not admire and approve their peculiarities, but they seemed to have found the rest which he had so long sought in vain."[8] Under such influence, there was a gradual growth of a longing after a new life, underneath the outward severity both of rubrical observance and of strict discipline.[9] Therefore, it seemed to be natural for Wesley as he landed back home with a bruised spirit, to turn to the Moravians in London.

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[3] See *Journal*, 1, 141-143.

[4] *Ibid*., 155.

[5] *Ibid*., 170-171.

[6] *Ibid*., 168-169.

[7] *Ibid*., 176-180.

[8] Rigg, *Op*. *cit*., p. 30.

On February 7, 1738, Wesley met Peter Böhler, a Moravian missionary who profoundly influenced his life. Böhler told Wesley about the true nature of saving faith. Wesley became a pursuer of "living faith." He cried out, "living faith was the 'one thing needful' for me."[10] Now he began to search the Bible and consult with Moravian friends. He writes in his Journal.

> I met Peter Böhler once more . . .
> I searched the Scriptures again touching this very thing . . .[11]

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[9] Ibid., p. 31.

[10] Journal, i, 471.

[11] Ibid., 454. (Works, i, 90-91) In seeking for this new truth, "living faith," the Scriptures came as the supreme authority to Wesley. In fact, he had been homo unius libri since 1730. Thus he wrote, in his letter to Newton, that "In 1730 I began to be homo unius libri, to study (comparatively) no book but the Bible." (Letters, iv, 299) The Oxford Methodists, Wesley claimed, were "Bible-Christians," taking the Bible, as interpreted by the primitive Church and our own, for their whole and sole rule." (Works, viii, 348) But as we have already observed, Wesley's admiration of the ancient church gradually led him to make "antiquity a co-ordinate rather than subordinate rule with Scripture." (Journal, i, 419). Now as he returned from

In his Bible study Wesley found a witness to the idea of "instantaneous conversion." Several living witnesses "who testified God had thus wrought in themselves, giving them in a moment such a faith in the blood of His Son as translated them out of darkness into light, out of sin and fear into holiness and happiness,"[12] concurred in this. "Here," Wesley declared, "ended my disputing. I would now only cry out, 'Lord help thou my unbelief!'"[13] This was a significant discovery in Wesley, and such new discovery was confirmed by his evangelical conversion on May 24, 1738. This gave him both an assurance and a power which hitherto he had lacked. Wesley wrote to this event in his Journal as follows:

Georgia to England, he realized that he had gone too far the other way, and he now put the Bible first. Wesley said in one of his letters, "I allow no other rule, whether of faith or practice, than the Holy Scripture." (Letters, i, 285) Such attitude of Wesley was continued to the end of his life. (See Works, xi, 449, xiii, 258, vii, 203) And next to the Scripture, "he was largely dominated by the practical." (Neely, Op. cit. p. 72) Therefore, in pursuing this new truth, Wesley first studied the Scripture with prayer and meditation, then he consulted those who were experienced in the things of God. (Sermons, i, 32)

[12] Journal, i, 455.

[13] Ibid.

> In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the *Epistle to the Romans*. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.[14]

It was a momentous crisis in Wesley which exerted a great influence over his subsequent life. Now Wesley really understood the true nature of living faith and that man is justified by grace through faith.[15] Salvation is now understood as a gift of grace rather than a reward of self discipline and good works. This was what the Moravians emphasized when Wesley was seeking for new life in Christ.

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[14] *Ibid*., 475-476. As for this experience of Wesley, scholars differ in their interpretation. For example, Umphrey Lee thinks this was "not an evangelical but mystical conversion - that is, the conversion of a religious man to a higher state of religious devotion." (*Op. cit*., p. 103). Arthur S. Yates believes that it was "a Pentecostal experience," - "the first occasion on which he gained an assurance of personal salvation." (Arthur S. Yates, *The Doctrine of Assurance* (London, The Epworth Press, 1952), p. 11). However the Roman Catholic, Piette, characteristically maintains that "Wesley's conversion should be dated, not in 1738, but in 1725 when he took Holy Orders. Piette argues that Wesley underwent a far deeper spiritual change in 1725 than the "gust of feeling" experienced in 1738. (Piette, *Op. cit*., 443). Nevertheless some Wesleyan scholars contend that this experience was Wesley's evangelical conversion. For example, William R. Cannon argues for this view. Cannon thinks that Piette errs in confusing moral resolution with evangelical conversion. (Cannon, *Op. cit*., pp. 67-68) It is obvious that there was a great change in Wesley's life between, before and after this experience. Wesley himself testified to it: "herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now I was always conqueror." (*Journal*, i, 477).

After this Wesley began to put a fresh emphasis upon faith. This is eloquently expressed in his sermon on "Salvation by Faith," which he preached in St. Mary's, Oxford, before the University, 18 days after his evangelical experience. In this sermon, he gave a clear exposition of "the faith through which we are saved," and "the salvation which is through faith."[16] But our interest here is primarily to see how this new discovery and experience of Wesley in 1738 then affected his attitude towards the sacraments. Bowmer affirms that because of this event, Wesley was enabled to make the sacrament a "Gospel Feast" and "therefore a very powerful force in the evangelical revival."[17] That is to say, Wesley now began to challenge the ritualism which leaned to so much mere formality and was so often encumbered with ritual. And he began to emphasize the paramount importance of present faith in Jesus Christ. It appeared that Peter Böhler took the place of Clayton and Deacon.[18] In his sermon on "The Great Privilege of Those that Are Born of God,"[19] Wesley declared that being born of God was not "barely the being baptized, or any outward change whatever; but a vast inward change wrought in the soul, by the operation of the Holy Ghost"[20] through faith. Thus "from 1738 onwards his high regard for the observance and traditions of the Church," Frank Baker says, "was always subservient to the will of God made known immediately by the witness of the Holy Spirit within his mind, and checked by Holy Scripture."[21]

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[15] Sermons, i, 37ff. (sermon on "Salvation by Faith")

[16] Ibid. 38. See 37-62. See also the paragraph added to his sermon on "The circumcision of the heart" i, 7 (Works, v, 205).

[17] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 61.

Such new emphasis of Wesley in his preaching and testimony tended to mislead people regarding himself, to their perplexity and shock.[22] To some people of his day, he was misunderstood as though he had joined with the Moravians. The "rules" of the Religious Society which Wesley founded[23] followed, to some extent, the Moravian model.[24] For example, in these "rules" there was a provision for "bands" which Wesley borrowed from the Moravians. Moreover in this there was no mention about the attendance at the worship of the Church and at the Lord's Supper, while "in the old Societies the rules touching these subjects were clear."[25] Instead, in these "rules" there was provided the "lovefeast" and "continual intercession" which occupied a prominent place in the religious life of the Moravians.[26]

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[18] Frederick Hunter, "The Manchester Non-Jurors and Wesley's High Churchism," London Quarterly and Holborn Review (1947), p. 60.

[19] According to Sugden, the editor of the standard Sermons of Wesley, this sermon was preached at Lambeth on Sept. 23, 1739. (Sermons, i, 298)

[20] Sermons, i, 300.

[21] Frank Baker, "John Wesley's Churchmanship," London Quarterly and Holborn Review (1960), p. 214. cf. Letters, i, 285-286.

[22] cf. Tyerman, The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, pp. 189-190.

Did, then, Wesley really follow Moravianism, even forsaking his high view of the sacraments? Here we must take notice that Wesley knew how little he could follow the Moravians, although he was conscious of his debt to them for his evangelical conversion. This will be discussed in the section which follows. There we shall see how he stood firm, and fell back upon the heritage of the Church of his upbringing, when he was confronted with an extreme form of Moravianism.

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[23] This society was called by Wesley "a little society" which early in 1738 he and his brother took part in establishing. This first met at Hutton's house, but afterwards, as the society grew swiftly, met in Fetter Lane, of which Wesley was accustomed to speak as "our society." However, Wesley, as we shall see later, broke with it when an extreme form of Moravianism was introduced to the society. (See Journal, i, 458, Simon, Op. cit., p. 196)

[24] Wesley himself admits that the "rules" of the society was followed "by the advice of Peter Bohler." (Journal, i, 458)

[25] Simon, Op. cit., p. 200.

[26] Ibid., pp. 197-198.

B. WESLEY'S REACTION TO THE MORAVIANS

In the previous section it has been maintained that the influence of the Moravians replaced that of the Nonjurors as Wesley returned from Georgia to England. The Moravian influence contributed a great deal to the evangelical experience of Wesley at Aldersgate Street. Wesley respected their advice upon his spiritual life and problems. He visited the Moravians in Germany during the summer after his evangelical experience.[27] His intimate contact with them for a time at least strengthened his admiration of their piety. At one time Wesley appeared as if he would almost "graft his own movement onto such Anglican-Moravian groups as the Fetter Lane Society,"[28] where Wesley resumed his preaching as he returned from Germany. Yet, at the same time, an uneasiness about the Moravian tendency towards "spiritual complacency" was arising in Wesley. Such a tension developed seriously when Philip H. Molther advocated the doctrine of "stillness" in the Fetter Lane Society.

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[27] See Journal, ii, 3n.

[28] Outler, Op. cit., p. 353. See Journal, i, 458f.

Molther came to London in October, 1739.[29] He was a distinctly pietistic Moravian minister, and a man of many gifts. There was a deep strain of mysticism in him. When he arrived in London, the Fetter Lane Society was brought to strife and confusion. For Molther taught that there were no degrees in faith, and therefore, those who did not have perfect faith had none at all.[30] According to him, man must be still, ceasing from outward works, till he receives faith. To put it in another way, he taught,

> (1) . . . They ought to be 'still'; that is (as they explained themselves), to abstain from the means of grace, . . . (2) that the ordinances are not means of grace, there being no other means than Christ.[31]

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[29] Molther was on his way to Pennsylvania, and stayed in London till the following September (Fitchett, *Op. cit.*, p. 305).

[30] cf. *Journal*, ii, 328-329.

[31] *Ibid.*, 313.

According to this teaching, there would accordingly be no benefit in Scripture reading, prayer, and attendance at the church and sacraments, until one comes to have true perfect faith. Thus all Christian ordinances lose their obligation.[32] The members of the Society had then to decide whether they should submit themselves to this extreme pietist teaching or continue to use the means of grace as was enjoined in the Church of England. Many Methodists were affected by this doctrine,[33] and this occasioned Wesley much anxiety. He at once attacked this unbalanced form of mysticism, whereas he believed "in using all the means of grace, . . . because I (i.e., Wesley) believe these are 'means of grace'; that is, do ordinarily convey God's grace to unbelievers; and That it is possible for a man to use them, without trusting in them."[34] Wesley exhorted the people, both privately and publicly, "neither to neglect nor rest in the means of grace,"[35] but "wait on God in all his ordinances."[36] Wesley discussed the doctrine with Molther himself.[37] Finally he took up in his exposition to the people at Fetter Lane some points which were at issue, speaking on "Why yet are ye subject to ordinances?," on prayer, the Holy Scripture, and the Lord's Supper.[38] But there was ultimately no alternative but for Wesley to withdraw from the Fetter Lane. Wesley then started his own Society at the Foundery, which marked the beginning of Methodism as a specific movement.[39]

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[32] Ibid., 343f.

[33] Sermons, i, 237.

[34] Journal, ii, 330 (Works, i, 258).

[35] Ibid., 320 (Works, i, 249, cf. 248, 271).

[36] Ibid. cf. 343ff (Works, i, 269ff).

This was an important decision for him to make. Wesley refused to follow an eccentric Moravianism, but decided to continue in the main stream of Christianity, believing in the observance of the ordinances of God.[40] As Bowmer says, "This was a victory for the ordinances of the Christian Church and for Wesley's Anglican training,"[41] and "It marked the final stage of Wesley's maturation as a theologian and it continued to serve as the basic datum-plane for all subsequent developments in his thought."[42]

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 356-362 (Works, i, 277-279).

[39] See Journal, ii, 379ff, 316n, Works, 269. cf. above p. 50.

[40] See Journal, ii, 327 for Curnock's editorial comment.

[41] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 40.

[42] Outler, Op. cit., p. 16. Nevertheless, there were echoes of this doctrine of "stillness" for years after Wesley's decisive rejection of the doctrine. Wesley kept

In this period, Wesley "preached up the ordinances."[43] He argued that they are means of grace, and that although this expression, "means of grace" is not found in the Bible, the sense of it is undenaibly there,[44] and "it has been generally used in the Christian Church for many years - in particular by our Church (i.e., the Church of England)."[45] Wesley also claimed that the whole body of Christians agreed that "Christ had ordained outward means, for conveying His grace into the souls of men."[46] The substance of Wesley's position at this stage is contained in his sermon on "The Means of Grace."[47] Therefore, as Lawson says, this sermon became "the occasion for one of the most momentous steps" in the life of early Methodism.[48]

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fighting against this doctrine. But we shall limit the matter to the period to which this chapter is specially devoted.

[43] Journal, ii, 343.

[44] Ibid., 360 (Works, i, 278).

[45] Sermons, i, 242.

[46] Ibid., 238.

[47] Sugden, the editor of the standard sermons of Wesley thinks that this sermon was in truth an antidote of the infection of the Moravian error, namely the doctrine of "stillness." He also thinks that this sermon was preached very often in substance during the years 1739-1746. (Sermons, i, 237-238).

[48] John Lawson, Notes on Wesley's Forty-Four Sermons (London, Epworth Press, 1952), p. 103.

In this sermon Wesley examined at large the whole question of the means of grace, defining the term itself.

> By 'means of grace,' I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby He might convey to men preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace.[49]

Here Wesley rejects the theory and practice of Molther and his followers.[50] He stresses that "all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the means which He hath ordained; in using, not in laying them aside,"[51] for Christ directs us to use the means. Wesley firmly believes that "God hath not left us undetermined; He hath shown us the way wherein we should go,"[52] namely, in the means of grace. Such emphasis of Wesley is echoed in the "Rules for the United Societies," which was the general rule of Methodism in these momentous days. It stresses attendance at the means of grace. One of the "rules" reads,

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[49] Sermons, i, 242.

[50] See sec. iv of this sermon. Wesley rejects the objections of the Moravians mainly appealing to the Bible.

[51] Sermons, i, 245.

[52] Ibid.

> It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation . . . by attending upon all the ordinances of God. Such are, the public worship of God; the ministry of word, . . .[53]

At the same time, Wesley, in this sermon, "The Means of Grace," warns against the other extreme. He writes,

> Whosoever, therefore, imagines there is any intrinsic power in any means whatsoever, does greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God.[54]

Wesley believes that there is no inherent power in the means themselves, but "it is God alone who is the Giver of every good gift, the Author of all grace; the whole power is of Him, whereby, through any of these (i.e., means), there is any blessing conveyed to our souls."[55] Wesley continues that God's operation of grace cannot be confined to certain fixed forms or means. "God is above all means."[56] "He doeth whatsoever and whensoever it pleaseth Him."[57] Therefore, according to Wesley, God is equally able to work by the means or by none at all as it pleases Him. He affirms that "the *opus operatum*, the mere *work done*, profiteth nothing; that there is no *power* to save but in the Spirit of God, no *merit* but in the blood of Christ."[58]

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[53] Works, viii, 271.

[54] Sermons, i, 243.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., 259.

Then how should these means be used? In this sermon, Wesley maintains that "the whole value of the means depends on their actual subservience to the end of religion."[59] That is to say, we are to "use all means *as means*; as ordained, not for their own sake, but in order to the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness."[60] Thus Wesley held together at the same time, the importance and necessity of the means of grace on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the freedom of God's power and operation in using the means, along with his evangelical zeal for the salvation of men.[61]

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[57] *Ibid*.

[58] *Ibid*.

[59] *Ibid*., 243.

[60] *Ibid*., 260.

[61] Lawson thinks that Wesley's conclusion here may be "the best possible counsel to the Christians." For this advice will help Christians neither to contaminate Christianity with mere formalism or superstition, nor to neglect the means of grace in Christian life. (Lawson, *Op. cit*., p. 108).

C. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We have considered chronologically how the Church of Wesley's upbringing and his contact with the Moravians influenced his life and theology of the sacraments. Wesley was brought up in the high church tradition of his parents at Epworth rectory. This laid the foundation of his theological formulation. Such training at home was put in effect in his practice in Oxford Methodism. And the Oxford Methodists sought to lead a sacramental revival within the Church of England. During his Oxford days, he came under influence of the Nonjurors, and he was led to a vehement admiration of ancient Christianity.

In Georgia Wesley was perhaps even obsessed with "the idea of reviving the practices of the primitive church."[62] He was so faithful in observing the rituals of the Church that he excluded from the Lord's Supper all who did not confirm to exceptionally strict conditions.[63] But as he returned from Georgia, an influence of the Moravians became apparent in Wesley's life, and it helped him to come to his evangelical experience at Aldersgate. Since then his emphasis was shifted from formal observance of the ordinances of the Church to direct conversion through faith. That is to say from this evangelical event his preaching became centered around the direct encounter with Christ - a living faith.

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[62] Frank Baker, "John Wesley's Churchmanship," London Quarterly and Holborn Review (1960), p. 211.

[63] cf. Journal, i, 419.

But we have also noted that Wesley knew the limitations of the Moravian influence upon his theology, and he fell back upon the main stream of Christianity, rejecting the extreme doctrine of Molther, namely, the doctrine of "stillness."

Here we must remember that although Wesley, on his return from Georgia, realized his error in "making antiquity a co-ordinate rather than subordinate rule with Scripture,"[64] and although since his evangelical experience at Aldersgate, he also inclined to subordinate antiquity to experience,[65] yet his admiration of ancient Christianity was by no means completely forgotten. Rather "his grounding in the Fathers continued to exert a formative influence upon his basic theology."[66] Such an attitude of Wesley was well expressed in his preface to the extracts from the Fathers.

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[64] Journal, i. 419.

[65] Frank Baker, Loc. cit., p. 211.

> We are to look on their writings, though not of equal authority with the holy Scriptures, . . . yet as worthy of a much greater respect than any composures which have been made since . . .[67]

His allegiance to the Church of England appeared never to have wavered, since he had learned to venerate the sacraments and ordinances of the Church of England both at Epworth and at Oxford. After his revolutionary experience of "living faith" in 1738, Wesley consciously tried to prove that the Methodists were not a Moravian sect but that their doctrines were identical with the English reformers.[68] For example, when his new emphasis became controversial Wesley turned to "inquire what the doctrine of the Church of England is concerning the much-controverted point of justification by faith,"[69] and extracted what he found in the Homilies and published it.[70] In this tract, "The

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Works, xiv, 225. cf. Journal, i, 112 (Oct. 21, 1735)

[68] Tyerman, The Life and Times of John Wesley, i, p. 184. See Outler, Op. cit., p. 16.

[69] Journal, ii, 101.

[70] Ibid. This extract, according to Outler, went through nineteen editions in Wesley's life time. This is

Doctrine of Salvation, Faith and Good Works, Extracted from the Homilies of the Church of England," he showed that the doctrine of the Church of England was what the Methodists preached: "We are justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law."[71] Wesley continued to believe that infants were washed from their sins at baptism.[72] Therefore, Bett seems to exaggerate when he states "Methodism owes more to Moravians than to any other movement."[73]

Wesley's first published doctrinal manifesto. (Outler, Op. cit., p. 120).

[71] "The Doctrine of Salvation, Faith and Good Works, . . .", Outler, Op. cit., p. 124.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Bett, Op. cit., p. 36. We have already mentioned that the main influences upon Wesley's theology could be reduced to the two, namely, the Church of England and his contact with the Moravians. Wesleyan scholars differ in their estimation of the relative strength of these two factors. This question itself is related to the question - "did Wesley's churchmanship change since 1738?" There have been two tendencies with regard to the churchmanship of Wesley, and the relation between Wesley and the Church of England. Some Wesley scholars, on the one hand, have argued that with his evangelical conversion in 1738, Wesley's churchmanship was changed distinctively from his former high church type. Rigg, for example, said that ". . .his (i.e., Wesley's) life was divided into two distinct and in many respects sharply contrasted periods (Op. cit., p. 18)." That is to say, according to him, up to 1738 Wesley had been a high church ritualist (Ibid., p. 19), but during his after life, Wesley held no high church tenets as to the sacraments. (Ibid., p. 48. For this point of view, see J. Wedgewood, John Wesley and the Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth Century (1870), p. 157, U. Lee, Op. cit., p. 13, Neely, Op. cit., pp. 72, 75).

On the other hand, others have considered that Wesley

For we notice Wesley's allegiance to the Church of England prior to, and subsequent to, his contact with the Moravians. One of his intimate friends, Alexander Knox testified that

> He (i.e., Wesley) was a Church of England man of the highest tone: not only did he value and love that pure spirit of faith and piety which the Church of England inherits from Catholic antiquity; but even in the more circumstantial part there was not a service or a ceremony, a gesture or a habit for which he had not an unfeigned predilection.[74]

Such loyalty to the Church of England in Wesley's thought was continued even to his later life.[75] Therefore, we are

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was always a highchurchman and sacramentalist of a comparatively high church type in his belief and practice. Rattenbury, for example, said that "There is no greater mistake than to suppose that Wesley ceased to be a High Churchman after 1738. The popular argument that the Wesley before 1738 and after were two different men, with different views, is a modern Methodist myth which serious investigation proves to be without foundation." (Rattenbury, Wesley's Legacy to the World, p. 175. For this point of view, see, A.B. Lawson, Op. cit., pp. 17-18, Albert Lyles, Methodism Mocked, pp. 44-45, Lawson, Methodism and Catholicism, pp. 12-14, A. E. Peaston, The Prayer Book Tradition in the Free Churches (London, 1964), p. 35).

However, we shall not discuss this question in detail, for this is considered beyond the scope of this chapter. We only say that Wesley's allegiance to the Church of England did not waver even after 1738.

[74] Rattenbury, The Conversion of the Wesleys (London, Epworth Press, 1938), p. 207.

[75] In 1777, Wesley believed the Church of England "to come nearer the scriptural and primitive plan than any other national Church upon earth." (Works, vii, 429) And again in 1788, he affirmed his allegiance to her: "I

not allowed easily to assume that his evangelical experience under the influence of the Moravians did change Wesley from high church ritualist into low church evangelical. The influence of the Moravians did not in the least shake his attachment to the Church of his upbringing.[76]

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the influence and impact of the Moravians upon Wesley was forgotten in his thought. In truth, the impact of his evangelical experience at Aldersgate was too great to be discounted. Rather in Wesley there was "a double strain," namely, "the conservative and the revolutionary,"[77] to the end of his life. Wesley kept these two together at the same time, without drawing an antithesis between them. In other words, the sacramental devotion (which characterized Wesley as a high churchman from his Oxford day) and evangelical fervor (which filled him after his evangelical experience at Aldersgate) were not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, these two elements were well blended in him.

Sometimes Christian people draw an antithesis between the words, "sacramental" and "evangelical," partly because

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declare once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England." (*Works*, xiii, 272, 274) See also *Works*, viv, 304.

[76] See J. H. Overton, *John Wesley* (London, Menthuen & Co., 1891), p. 68.

[77] Peaston, *Op. cit.*, p. 36.

they cannot find harmony between the formality of the sacrament and the freedom of evangelical worship. But such antithesis seems to be unknown to Wesley. Evangelicalism, in general, tends to emphasize the free individual approach to God, and to devalue the necessity and importance of the sacraments. But Wesley corrected this when Molther advocated an extreme doctrine of "stillness." In Wesley there was a true synthesis. Here we begin to appreciate such a synthesis made by him, and also to see a unity in Wesley's life.

In conclusion, therefore, we may say that in the formulation of his doctrine of the sacraments, Wesley was influenced by the Church of England, by the ancient Christian church, largely through the Nonjurors, and by the Moravians. Yet Wesley gathered into himself the most worthy elements of these, and after passing them through the fire of his vital evangelical experience, presented them with evangelical fervor.[78] As Bowmer maintains, Wesley was always a Churchman,[79] but his churchmanship must be seen in its true relation to the evangelical mission of Wesley, so that exaggeration of its relative importance may be avoided.[80] For in Wesley, especially after 1738, the great work was the proclamation of the Gospel - the saving of souls. He would subordinate everything to this single purpose.[81] From 1738 onwards, Wesley continuously recognized the importance and necessity of the traditional means of grace against the extreme of "stillness," yet, his emphasis was not upon a mere observance of the ordinances of the Church but upon using them as means subservient to the end of religion.[82] Thus, in Wesley the means of grace were enlisted in the service of his evangelical fervor.

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[78] cf. Lawson, Methodism and Catholicism, p. 12ff.

[79] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 57.

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[80] Rattenbury, The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley (London, Epworth Press, 1948), p. 3.

[81] Wesley wrote, "I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare, unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation. . . ." (Letters, i, 285. See also Works, viii, 299, 309, Sermons, i, 31-32.

[82] Sermons, i, 243.

PART THREE

ANALYSIS
OF
WESLEY'S DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

CHAPTER FIVE

WESLEY'S DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM: I.

THE INSTITUTION AND MEANING OF BAPTISM

As we have already indicated,[1] scholars are various in their interpretation of Wesley's doctrine of baptism. Our work here, therefore, must almost exclusively depend on Wesley's own writings. Wesley, however, has apparently not left any carefully and systematically wrought-out doctrine of baptism. In fact, it appears that Wesley was not greatly drawn into controversy in this area. Also, most of his hearers were already baptized in their infancy. So, consequently he was not moved to preach a whole sermon on the subject or to write carefully anything of his own exposition concerning his doctrine of baptism. It seems that he was content to rely on suitable writings of others for the instruction of his people concerning this sacrament.

In 1751 he published _Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism, extracted from a late writer_.[2] As the title indicates, this is an extract of another work, by which he wanted only to "rehearse a few arguments commonly used to vindicate the practice of baptizing children."[3] In his later years when a new church polity was to be inaugurated for the American Methodists, he prepared a liturgy and a standard of doctrine for them. He then abridged the Articles, and the Baptismal office of the Church of England.[4] However, his only full scale treatment of baptism was the abridged edition of his father's "A Short Discourse of Baptism."[5] And his other writings on the subject are nearly all incidental references which we must collect from his sermons, the Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament and Old Testament, and the tracts, letters, and Journal.

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[1] See chapter two.

[2] For this tract, see Green, _Works of John and Charles Wesley_, #149. This tract was taken mainly from _The History of Infant Baptism_ by W. Wall, Vicar of Shoreham, in Kent.

In this chapter then, working on these writings,[6] we shall attempt to summarize his own teaching on the sacrament of baptism, and discuss for clarification the problems raised by various interpretations. We shall proceed in this chapter, first of all, to observe Wesley's definition of baptism. We then explore the meaning of baptism in Wesley: - the main benefits of baptism, his view on the Anglican doctrine of baptismal regeneration and whether he believed in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. We shall then also examine how his belief on baptismal regeneration is to be reconciled with his emphasis on conversion through faith.

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[3] Wesley, Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism, Extracted from a Late Writer (London: 1791), p. 3. Its first edition was published in 1751.

[4] See The Sunday Service of The Methodists in North America, With other Occasional Services (London: 1784).

[5] See, Green, Works of John and Charles Wesley, p. 107. Outler, Op. cit., pp. 317ff. Works, X, 188ff.

[6] It seems to be wise for us to begin our study with A Treatise on Baptism, since it is only full scale treatment of baptism among these writings.

In chapter six we shall then go on to discuss the relation of faith to baptism in Wesley. In this we have to discover what are the grounds of infant baptism, and how the relation of faith to baptism in the case of an adult is to be compared with the same relation in the case of an infant. We shall also observe Wesley's attitude toward the mode of baptism. Then we come to view Wesley's doctrine of baptism in the framework of his theology, and especially of his doctrine of salvation. These findings will in turn provide for us some insight for an attempt to reconstruct a theology of baptism in harmony with the theological structure of Wesley.

A. DEFINITION AND INSTITUTION OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

Wesley insists that the sacrament of baptism is necessary because it is one of the means of grace ordained by the Lord. The means of grace are "the ordinary channels" whereby God conveys to men His grace, and in which we are to wait on God's grace.[7] Therefore Wesley says that this sacrament is obligatory to all Christians.[8]

According to Wesley, baptism is "the initiatory sacrament" which in the ordinary way is "the only means of entering into the Church or into heaven."[9] Wesley, therefore, maintains that "baptizing" is included in the whole design of Christ's commission:

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[7] For Wesley's view on the means of grace, see above, pp. 81-83.

[8] Works, X, 188.

[9] Ibid., 192. Wesley writes, "In the ordinary way, there is no other means of entering into the Church or into heaven." (p. 192)

> 'Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them. And lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'[10]

Wesley, therefore, claims that "as long as this commission lasted, as long as Christ promised to be with them in the executing of it, . . . baptism should remain in his Church."[11]

Wesley believed then that the sacrament of baptism was instituted by Jesus Christ. According to him, it is Jesus Christ "who alone has power to institute a proper sacrament."[12] Further, he recognized the foundation of our baptims in the baptism of Jesus. He thought that the significance of the baptism of Jesus lies in the two-fold fact, that Jesus in this way identified Himself with men who are to "observe all His righteous ordinances," and that He showed to Christians in all ages the example that they are to submit themselves, as He did, to the "institutions" of Christianity, so that they may appropriate the grace of

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[10] Ibid., 193. See also Notes on Matt. 28:19.

[11] Works, X, 193.

[12] Ibid., 188.

God.[13] However, Wesley believed that what Jesus had undertaken at this baptism was accomplished on the cross, to fulfill all righteousness for us.[14] The baptism of Jesus at the Jordan river was thus connected, in the thought of Wesley, with the death of the cross on Calvary, in the same way as the cross is connected with the resurrection of Jesus.[15]

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[13] See Notes on Matt. 3:15, 16. Here Wesley writes, "the particular meaning of our Lord seems to be, that it becometh us to do . . . in order to fulfill, that is, that I may fully perform, every part of the righteous law of God. . . . Let our Lord's submitting to baptism teach us a holy exactness in the observance of those institutions which owe their obligation merely to a divine command."

[14] Notes on I John 5:6. Here Wesley states, "He not only undertook at His baptism 'to fulfill all righteousness,' but on the cross accomplished what he had undertaken." See also Notes on Luke 12:50. Rom. 6:3,4.

[15] In seeking the foundation of Christian baptism, it is very important to observe the relation of baptism to Christ's death. We may wish that Wesley had elaborated this further. For in New Testament doctrine the baptism of Jesus was understood as having taken place "in view of His death, which effects forgiveness of sins for all men." (Cullmann, *Op. cit.*, p. 18). In such an understanding of the baptism of Jesus at the Jordan river, we could understand that Jesus, identifying himself with His people, submitted himself to the sacrament of baptism in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled. The baptism of Jesus is related to righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), not only of his own but also of the whole people. The word, "all (πάν)" should be emphasized here. This idea is paralleled with what Wesley expressed in his comment on I John 5:6.

In the light of this understanding, we may come to appreciate the meaning of baptism (βαπτίζειν) which Jesus teaches in Mark 10:38. Jesus in this verse said, "Can ye be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized

The institution of baptism is therefore founded rather upon the whole ministry of our Lord. Christ himself is the author and power of the sacrament of baptism.[16] And the end of Christ's institution of baptism lies in man's participation with Christ so as to be raised with Christ, through the operation of God in the soul.[17]

The practice of washing of water, however, was long familiar to the Jews as a religious ceremony. It was one of the rites by which proselytes were introduced into the Jewish covenant, and this rite was used by John the Baptist also.[18] John's baptism was a baptism unto

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with?" Here "be baptized" means "suffering" (see Notes on Mark 10:38), that is, "die" on the cross. (cf. Luke 12:50). Thus the baptism of Jesus points forward to the cross and resurrection in which alone His baptism finds its fulfillment. (cf. Cullmann, *Op. cit.*, p. 19). This seems to be the reason why Jesus did not himself baptize, and also why Christian baptism became possible only from the moment when these events (*Heilsgeschichte*) were completed. (cf. Acts 2:, and see Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans., and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), vol. I, p. 538). In truth, when Jesus was baptized, as John the Baptist witnessed, he was baptized as "the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29)." And at his baptism, Jesus received the Holy Spirit in all His fulness (John 1:33), which signifies that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit, as John testified.

[16] See *Works*, X 188, 193, *Sermons*, I, 243.

[17] Notes on Col. 2:12.

[18] *Works*, X 196.

repentance, which looked forward to the coming of Christ,[19] and "pointed at Christ."[20] Moreover, this baptism symbolically indicated that Christ baptizes men with the Holy Spirit and with fire, which promise was eminently fulfilled at Pentecost.[21] Here is the beginning of the practice of Christian baptism. This is baptism into Christ, or into the name of Christ (εἰς Χριστόν) or εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Χριστοῦ).[22] This is therefore to be administered in the name of "the Father who anointed Him, and the Spirit with which He was anointed, to His office."[23]

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[19] Notes on John 1:25.

[20] Notes on Acts 19:4.

[21] Notes on Matt. 3:6.

[22] Here we see the distinctive feature of Christian baptism. It is baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and by the invariable custom of the Church using the triune formula. Acts speaks of the first Christian baptism in the context of the Pentecost story - an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on "all flesh" which presupposes the cross and resurrection of Christ, and which follows on Pentecost. cf. Kittel, *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 539, see also above footnote 15 on page 113.

[23] Notes on Acts 8:48. cf. Notes on Matt. 28:19.

B. THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

i) Main Benefits of Baptism

What advantages or benefits does baptism bring to men? Wesley listed several in his Treatise on Baptism and some others are to be found described elsewhere in his writings. These we may now summarize.

The first of these benefits is "the washing away of the guilt of original sin, by the application of the merits of Christ's death."[24] In other words, according to Wesley, we who were "by nature children of wrath," are now made children of God through baptism.[25] Wesley believed that all men, including infants, are subject to original sin, and "The whole race of mankind are obnoxious to both the guilt and punishment of Adam's transgression."[26] But he believed that by Jesus Christ, the last Adam, "the free gift came upon all men, to justification of life."[27]

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[24] Works, X, 190.

[25] Ibid., 194.

[26] Ibid., 190.

[27] Ibid., 190 f. cf. Notes on Rom. 5:18, Works, VIII, 277-278.

However, "the virtue of this free gift, the merits of Christ's life and death," continues he, "are applied to us in baptism."[28] Wesley writes,

> the benefit of this is to be received through the means which he hath appointed; through baptism in particular, which is the ordinary means he hath appointed for that purpose; and to which God hath tied us, though he may not have tied himself.[29]

Baptism for Wesley is thus said to be the "ordinary instrument of our justification."[30]

Secondly, Wesley maintains that "By baptism we enter into covenant with God; into that everlasting covenant, which he hath commanded for ever," namely, "the evangelical covenant,"[31] being admitted into the body of Christ's church. As the Jews entered into the covenant relationship with God by circumcision, so by baptism we enter into "the evangelical covenant" with God, which God promised to people with the spiritual Israel. Therefore, as circumcision led the Jews to the rite of continuance within the covenant people (i.e., passover), so baptism leads the way to the Lord's table in the Church.[32] Wesley apparently thought that baptism was sufficient qualification for receiving the Holy Communion.[33]

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[28] Works, X, 190, 191.

[29] Ibid., 193.

[30] Ibid., 191, see also Ibid., 189.

[31] Ibid., 191.

Wesley further went on to say that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism,[34] so that "the constant fruits of faith" may abide with us.[35] We therefore now draw "new spiritual life from this new root, through His Spirit, who fashions us like unto Him, and particularly with regard to His death and resurrection."[36] In consequence, says Wesley, we are made "heirs of the kingdom of heaven,"[37] being "made members of Christ."[38] He writes,

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[32] Notes on Exodus 12:48 (Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament, London, 1765, vol. I, p. 237).

[33] In fact, there is no evidence that Wesley insisted upon confirmation as a necessary condition for receiving the Lord's Supper, both when he was in Georgia and England. (cf. Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 104). Furthermore, Wesley omitted the office of confirmation from the Sunday Service he prepared for the American Methodists in 1784 and 1786.

[34] Notes on I Cor. 12:13, cf. Works, X, 192.

[35] Notes on Acts 2:38. According to Wesley, the gift of the Holy Spirit mentioned here means "the constant fruits of faith, even righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Notes on Acts 2:38). In his letter to James Hutton, dated May 28, 1739, Wesley said, "Mrs. Labbe . . . was baptized . . . and filled with the Holy Ghost." (Letters, I, 313). And he also said the same thing in his letter dated June 4, 1739. (see Letters, I, 317).

[36] Notes on Rom. 6:3,4. cf. Matt. 11:11. Poetical Works, II, 246. Notes on Titus 3:5.

> Baptism doeth now save us, if we live answerable thereto; if we repent, believe and obey the gospel: Supposing this, as it admits us into the Church here, so into glory hereafter.[39]

In short, Wesley believed that baptism is the initiatory sacrament through which is washed away the guilt of original sin, and by which we enter into the new covenent relationship with God on being admitted into the Church. According to him, baptism is "more than barely being admitted into the Church."[40] That is to say, in baptism we are regenerated or born again by adoption and grace, through the invisible work of His Spirit in us.[41] Yet, this is only the beginning of the reality of Christian life which is to be fulfilled in the life of sanctification, - "being risen with Christ, through the powerful operation of God."[42]

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[37] Works, X, 192.

[38] Ibid., 191.

[39] Ibid., 192.

[40] Ibid., 191, 192.

[41] Ibid., 192. See also Twenty-five Articles, XVI, "Of the Sacraments."

[42] Notes on Col. 2:12. cf. Notes on I John 5:6, Rom. 3:4, Titus 3:5, Poetical Works, vol. II, 246. Baptism, is, in some sense, thus inclusive and eschatological in its nature.

It thus appears that Wesley subscribes to a position which connects baptism with regeneration, namely, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. He writes,

> By water then as a means, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again: whence it is also called by the Apostle; 'the washing of regeneration.'[43]

Nevertheless, at this point, some Wesley scholars differ in their interpretations. There is therefore a call for further discussion.

ii) Did Wesley really accept the doctrine of baptismal regeneration?

Did Wesley really believe the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as appears to be required by the Prayer-Book of the Church of England? At this point, we face some different interpretations among Wesley scholars. By the way of a traditional anti-Anglican view, for example, T. G.

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[43] Works, X, 192. For this belief, it appears that Wesley appealed to the words of Jesus in John 3:5, and to the doctrinal position of the Church of England and ancient fathers. (see Ibid., 191).

Williams maintains that Wesley did not, but opposed the doctrine of baptismal regeneration with all his power.[44] Williams argues that Wesley's new emphasis, after his own evangelical experience in 1738, upon living faith and direct encounter with God tended to turn him from a high church view of baptism to a low view, that is, to a denial of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. He says,

> In his ministration he (i.e., Wesley) did not tell the sinner that he had received the new birth, and had been regenerated, and made a member of Christ when the baptismal waters, from the sacred hand of a priest . . . had touched his brow; but he did say to such as trusted in his outward ceremony, 'Baptized or unbaptized you must be born again.'[45]

To support this, Williams quotes Cardinal Newman's testimony to the position of John Wesley on the question of baptismal regeneration.

> Counsel then, and pamphleteers may put forth unanswerable arguements in behalf of the Catholic interpretation of the Baptismal service . . . in vain did the eighteenth century use it as a sort of

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[44] T. G. Williams, Methodism and Anglicanism in the Light of Scripture and History (Toronto, 1888), p. 42.

[45] Ibid., p. 50. To support his view point, he further quotes from Wesley's sermon on "The New Birth." But he apparently misinterpreted what Wesley intended to mean in those passages, which we shall discuss later.

watchward against Wesley.[46]

This would indicate that "Episcopalians warned people against Wesley and his teaching, because he, like every true Protestant and loyal Churchman, denied the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration and believed it to be the essence of Popery."[47] Did Wesley then, as Williams interprets the matter, come to reject baptismal regeneration?

Here attention may be drawn to the alterations to his father's discourse which Wesley made in his Treatise on Baptism. Wesley's treatise is an abridgment of his father's discourse on baptism published a half century before. In this Wesley omitted terms such as "baptismal regeneration," and words which might refer to the idea of baptismal regeneration.[48] He also deleted the words, "sacramental," or

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[46] Difficulties of Anglicans, vol. I, p. 23-24, quoted by Williams, Op. cit., pp. 44-45.

[47] Williams, Op. cit., p. 45.

[48] See Works, X, 192 in comparison with Samuel Wesley, Op. cit., p. 207. Where Samuel says "Now in consequence of this Baptismal Regeneration, and our being therein made the children of God . . . ," John Wesley just reads, "In consequence of our being made children of God . . ." Further Wesley completely omitted the sentence, "the Laver of Regeneration in Baptism . . . (Samuel Wesley, Op. cit., p. 201). Moreover he omitted the prayer for sanctification of the water which is in his father's discourse: "That the Water may be sanctified to the mystical washing away of Sin." (Samuel Wesley, Op. cit., p. 200, cf. Works, X, 191).

"sacramentally."[49] Are these alterations then sufficient to indicate that Wesley now came to reject baptismal regeneration? On the contrary, the treatise still maintains that we are made children of God in baptism, inward grace being infused into our souls, and the guilt of original sin being washed away in baptism. In other words, Wesley continued to acknowledge that "the new birth within is recognized as simultaneous with the sacramental washing without."[50] Therefore, it may be safe to affirm with Parris that Wesley was still "in the line with the general Anglican position."[50]

Some however have sought to minimize this by asserting in the first place that this treatise on baptism was only Samuel Wesley's antiquated discourse, and not Wesley's own teaching,[52] and that his own ideas must be seen in his sermons. They presuppose that his sermons present a different point of view on baptism from that of treatise.[53] Such arguments however seem to be without ground. For as Tyerman points out,[54] we find in his sermons stronger language by which Wesley forcefully confirms his belief of baptismal regeneration. In his sermon on "The New Birth,"[55] he declares,

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[49] Wesley did not use words such as those underlined in the following: "*sacramental* *Use* of water (Samuel Wesley, *Op. cit.*, p. 191, cf. *Works*, X, 188), "*sacramental* *union* with Christ . . . (Samuel Wesley, *Op. cit.*, p. 203, of *Works*, X, 191). We notice that Wesley used terms such as "spiritual, vital etc. (cf. *Works*, X, 191).

[50] Starkey, *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

[51] Parris, *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

[52] Rigg, *Op. cit.*, 2nd edition, p. 42.

> It is certain our Church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole Office for the Baptism of Infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants. For neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in a person of riper years.[56]

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[53] Proc. W. H. S. XXXII, p. 121. Sermons, I, 281.

[54] Tyerman, The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley . . . vol. II, p. 265.

[55] This sermon was first preached on May 29, 1743.

[56] Sermons, I, 238. (The New Birth). T. G. Williams argues that this passage does not indicate that Wesley held this view, but that he only mentioned the supposition of the Church of England which he did not approve. (Williams, Op. cit., p. 45). The context of his whole sermon on the contrary implies that Wesley accepted the doctrine. Paul Sanders concurs with the latter view. (Sanders, An Appraisal of John Wesley's Sacramentalism in the Evolution of Early American Methodism, unpublished dissertation at Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1954, p. 95).

In truth, "the baptismal services of the Church of England teach no less unmistakably the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration."[57] In the Office of the baptism of infants,[58] the congregation prays, ". . . that he, coming to Thy Holy Baptism, may receive remission of sins by spiritual regeneration," and again, "Give Thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again, . . ." And immediately after the baptism of the infant, the priest gives the exhortation to thankful prayer saying, "Seeing now, . . . that this child is regenerated . . ." In the Church Catechism,[59] the inward grace conferred by baptism is defined as being, "A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England also teach that in baptism the blessings of regeneration are not only signified by the baptism, but are also conveyed to the one who is baptized.[60] Thus the teaching of the Church of England is explicit on this point: that is, "Anglicanism accepts baptismal regeneration."[61] Wesley was trained in, and apparently accepted her teaching.[62] He described his own baptism as one in which he received "washing of the Holy Ghost."[63]

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[57] William Baker, A Plain Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England . . . 4th ed. (London, Longmans, Green, & Co., 1894), p. 155.

[58] See Book of Common Prayer (1662). These prayers of congregation were retained in his Sunday Service which he prepared for the American Methodists in 1784.

[59] See Book of Common Prayer (1662). cf. Sermons, II, 237 f.

[60] Article (XXVII) "On Baptism" in B.C.P.

Thus we may not regard his Treatise on Baptism merely as a reproduction of "old Samuel's discourse" abridged.[64] We must not overlook the fact that this treatise was published quite a number of years after his evangelical experience at Aldersgate Street, and when his sermons had become informed by an evangelical tone. Moreover this treatise was published for circulation among the Methodists. For these facts, this treatise seems to be intended publicly to announce Wesley's view on the subject. Therefore, we must also regard the changes from his father's discourse which he made in the treatise as having significance in his theological development.

Such alterations in the treatise reflect his concern lest his high church view on baptism should imply an *ex opere operato* view of the sacrament.[65] We already pointed out that Wesley did give warning against the danger of such an extreme view of the means of grace. His strong protest is shown again in his "Popery Calmly Considered."[66] He writes,

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[61] Cannon, *Op. cit*., p. 42 n.

[62] *Sermons*, I. 281 (Sugden's note).

[63] *Journal*, I, 465 (for May 24, 1738).

[64] cf. Rigg, *Op. cit*., 2nd ed. p. 42.

[65] See Parris, *Op. cit*., p. 39.

> the grace does not spring merely ex opere operato: It does not proceed from the mere elements, or the words spoken; but from the blessing of God, in consequence of his promise to such as are qualified for it.[67]

Wesley seems to be making the same point when he comments, in his treatise, on the teaching of the Church of England on regeneration:

> Nor does she ascribe it to the outward washing, but to the inward grace, which added thereto, makes it a sacrament.[68]

Wesley, by thus separating the sign of baptism from the thing signified - the inward grace of regeneration, is carefully guarding against any interpretation of ex opere operato, which savors of magic, whereas he still holds the sacrament of baptism as a means of grace.[69]

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[66] Published in 1779. See Works, X, 149ff.

[67] Works, X. 149, cf. Ibid., 113.

[68] Ibid., 192.

[69] Such deliberate distinction between the outward sign and inward grace (in safeguarding against a wrong emphasis

Such safeguarding by Wesley is shown in other writings as well. For example, when he preached about the sacrament of baptism, he reminded the listeners that the Catechism of the Church clearly made the distinction between the outward sign and the invisible grace, so that baptism, the sign, must be distinct from the grace, the regeneration signified.[70] And in the same sermon, he concluded that in such understanding of the matter, the new birth cannot be said to be the same thing as baptism.[71] Again in his letter written in 1758, Wesley made it clear that the outward sign is not identical with regeneration itself. He states,

> It (i.e., baptism) is the outward sign of that inward and spiritual grace; but no part of it at all. It is impossible it should be. The outward sign is no more a part of the inward grace than the body is a part of the soul.[72]

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on the sacrament of baptism) is also reflected in his Sunday Service, and religious Articles which he prepared in 1784 for the American Methodists. In the Offices and Articles on baptism he made several omissions which echo with those in his treatise. We shall discuss in detail later these omissions. See section iii.

[70] Sermons, II, 237-238 (The New Birth), see also Works, VI, 395 (sermon on "Of the Church"), Sermons, I, 71.

[71] Sermons, II, 238.

[72] Letters, IV, 38 (a letter to Mr. Porter, vicar of Reymerston). T. G. Williams comments that this letter indicates that Wesley no longer held the high church view of baptism as a Church of England clergyman, while Mr. Porter

Wesley's comment on relevant passages of the Bible also reflects such distinction between baptism and regeneration itself. In his comment on I Pet. 3:21, discussing the Ark as an antitype of baptism, he says,

> . . . through the water of baptism we are saved from the sin which overwhelms the world as a flood: not, indeed, the bare outward sign, but the inward grace; a divine consciousness that both our persons and our actions are accepted through Him who died and rose again for us.[73]

To put this in another way, he means that though on a superficial view we are saved by the water, in truth we are saved not by water, but by the inward grace wrought by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the water. For the operation of the Holy Spirit is to be understood rather in terms of interpersonal relationship than of automatic mechanism. Baptismal grace is not something mechanically medi-

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did. That is to say that Wesley rejected the baptismal regeneration of both infants and adults. (Williams, Op. cit., p. 47). But, at this point, Williams seems to misread the intention and contents of the letter. For Wesley is here simply trying to distinguish the outward sign from the inward grace, the thing signified, guarding against a tendency towards a magical view of the sacrament which Wesley certainly considered misinterpreted the doctrinal position of the Church of England. cf. Parris, Op. cit., p. 40n.

[73] Notes on I Pet. 3:21. cf. Works, X. 192.

ated by the water,[74] but operated by God through His chosen means.

Such understanding of the sacrament of baptism accords with Wesley's view of the means of grace, in which he makes clear that the means of grace do not have any power apart from the operation of God. He reminds us that we must always "retain a lively sense that God is above all means."[75] "Remember also," continued Wesley, "to use all means _as means_; as ordained, not for their own sake, but"in order to the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness."[76] For they are sacramental instruments, yet they are not ends in themselves.

How then can we reconcile his belief of baptismal regeneration with his careful distinction between the outward sign from the inward grace itself? Cannon thought that by distinguishing between baptism, the outward sign, and regeneration, an inward grace wrought by the Holy Spirit, Wesley "denies that the Church of England teaches baptismal regeneration."[77] It, however, seems to this writer that

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[74] See _Sermons_, I, 300. cf. Elden Dale Dunlap, _Methodist Theology in Great Britain in the Nineteenth Century_ (Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Yale University, 1956), pp. 37-38.

[75] _Sermons_, I, 259 (The Means of Grace).

[76] _Ibid_., 260.

[77] Cannon, _Op_. _cit_., p. 126. cf. Sanders, _Op_. _cit_., p. 101n.

Wesley, on the contrary, intended to defend her position, by thus qualifying the definition of her doctrine of baptismal regeneration: "though baptism and regeneration are distinguishable perhaps, and water is not the same as the Spirit, yet, both are united in one act and stand together."[78] That is to say, baptismal regeneration is to be understood in the sense that regeneration is a simultaneous occurrence with baptism, and worked through the baptism. It is not to be taken as though the water itself mystically washes away the sins of the recipient. In this way only does Wesley accept the doctrine of baptismal regeneration of infants, and he does not question Anglican doctrine at this point. He believes that "all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again."[79] At this point, "Wesley is less uncertain."[80]

Wesley, however, takes a somewhat different view with regard to the case of adult baptism. In his writings, especially in his sermons, he is found drawing a distinction between the case of infant and adult baptism at this point.[81] That is to say, in the case of adult baptism, Wesley maintains, the regeneration does not always simultaneously occur with the baptism as it does in infant baptism; namely, "they do not constantly go together."[82] He clearly states,

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[78] Ibid.

[79] Sermons, II, 238 (The New Birth).

[80] Starkey, Op. cit., p. 92, see Parris, Op. cit., p. 42. Philip Watson, "Wesley and Luther on Christian Perfection." Ecumenical Reveiw, XV (April, 1963), p. 291.

> Whatever be the case with infants, it is sure all of riper years who are baptized are not at the same time born again.[83]
>
> A man may possibly 'born of water,' and yet not be 'born of the Spirit.'[84]

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[81] His distinction between the case of infant and adult baptism is less unclear in his sermons and other writings, but it seems to be somewhat obscure in his Treatise on Baptism. Wesley scholars differ on their interpretation on this point. For example, Starkey, on the one hand, thinks that "In this treatise, baptismal regeneration of both infants and adults is strongly affirmed . . . (Starkey, Op. cit., p. 91)." On the other hand, Colin Williams and Wheeler indicate that in this treatise Wesley seems to have held baptismal regeneration "so far as it regarded the effect of baptism upon infants." (Wheeler, Op. cit., p. 302, Williams, Op. cit., p. 116). This writer is inclined to concur with the latter. For although Wesley appears to be dealing with the benefits of baptism in general in the treatise, yet we must keep this in our mind that his primary concern then was about the infant baptism, as Outler points out (Outler, Op. cit., p. 318). Furthermore we are aware that in his time the practice of adult baptism was very rare, since most of the people were already baptized in their infancy. Moreover, in his sermons and writings published before the treatise, Wesley is already found distinguishing infant from adult baptism, as we shall see in the following.

[82] Sermons, II, 238.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

There are remarks in his other writings which echo such a distinction. For example, in his tract entitled, "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,"[85] he states that infants are justified in baptism "although they cannot then either believe or repent."[86] But, in the same tract, he says that as far as adults are concerned they must in baptism repent and believe if the new birth is to be given to them.[87] In the case of adult baptism, the new birth "does not always accompany baptism,"[88] *vice versa*. For this fact, Wesley gives some evidence in his Journal. He records that among several adults he baptized, "one only was at that time born again, in the higher sense of the word, . . . Most of them were only born again in a lower sense; . . . and some (as it has since too plainly appeared) neither in one sense nor the other."[89]

From these observations it seems to be clear that there are two different understandings of baptism in Wesley's thought, namely, one for infants and another for adults. Infant baptism, for Wesley, is "a justifying and regeneraging sacrament,"[90] yet, not all adults who are baptized are regenerated. If the new birth is simultaneously to be given they must repent and believe.[91]

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[85] Published in 1745. *Works*, VIII, 46ff.

[86] *Works*, VIII, 52. cf. *Ibid*., 48.

[87] *Ibid*., 48.

[88] *Sermons*, II, 238.

[89] *Journal*, II, 135 (for Jan. 25, 1739).

For this understanding of adult baptism Wesley appeals to the doctrinal position of the Church of England, as he does for infant baptism. He writes,

> Infants, indeed, our Church supposes to be justified in baptism, although they cannot then either believe or repent. But she expressly requires both repentance and faith in those who come to be baptized when they are of riper years.[92]

Here Wesley is found again consciously keeping his doctrine in line with that of the Church of England. It is true that the rubrics of the Church of England presuppose the faith of those who come to be baptized.[93] Nevertheless, we must admit that Wesley's understanding of faith was much deeper than that of most English churchmen in relation to baptism. Their understanding of faith in baptism was more or less an intellectual assent to or moral resolution for the teaching of the Church, whereas Wesley meant by it "saving faith."[94]

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[90] Philip Watson, Loc. cit., p. 291.

[91] Notes on Acts 22:16. Commenting on the baptism of Paul (adult baptism), Wesley puts a note: "Baptism administered to real penitents is both a means and a seal of pardon."

[92] Works, VIII, 52.

[93] See Book of Common Prayer (1662), "The Ministration of Baptism to such as are of Riper Years." In this baptismal office, the priest demands of each of adults to be baptized these questions:

Therefore, it seems not to do justice to Wesley's own understanding when one simply claims that "Wesley was a High Churchman on the doctrine of baptismal regeneration."[95] Nor is it fair to him when one merely says that Wesley opposed the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. For, so far as Wesley's writings show, his baptismal doctrine never went higher than acknowledging baptismal regeneration in infant baptism. Perhaps, then, it may be said that Wesley

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Question: "Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world . . .?"
Answer: "I recounce them all."
Question: "Dost thou believe in God . . . And in Jesus Christ . . . in the Holy Ghost; . . . and everlasting life after death?"
Answer: "All this I steadfastly believe."
Question: "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?"
Answer: "That is my desire."
Question: "Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?"
Answer: "I will endeavour so to do, God being my helper."
Those questions are to be directed to the Godfathers and Godmothers in the baptism of infant.

[94] See Sermons, I, 40-41 (Salvation by Faith).

[95] T. G. Williams, Op. cit., p. 41.

held both a Catholic element (baptismal regeneration in infants) and an evangelical apprehension (emphasis on "living faith" for evangelical conversion in adults).[96] To disregard either of them in Wesley seems to do injustice to his own standing on the matter.[97]

iii) Did Wesley change his view on baptismal regeneration in his later years (1784-1786)?

Some Wesley scholars say that Wesley changed his view on baptismal regeneration in his later years. This is to say, his revision of the Book of Common Prayer and Articles of Religion in 1784 proves that in his later years Wesley did not teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration in any sense.[98] Others, on the other hand, claim that he still maintained his early view, dispite some alterations or omissions he made in his 1784 revision.[99] Here we come to examine his revision of the Book of Common Prayer and Articles of Religion of the Church of England for the American Methodists in 1784 and 1786.

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[96] Whether or not his emphasis on faith in (adult) baptism opens the way for interpreting adult baptism in terms of believer's baptism will be discussed later.

[97] This, however, poses the problem in crucial fashion with regard to the implication of the meaning of baptism in his preaching on the new birth. We shall discuss this problem later.

[98] See, Rigg, Op. cit., 2nd ed. p. 46, Sugden's note in Sermons, I, 282. See also above p. 38.

Since the Revolutionary War had left many Methodists in America largely without pastors, Wesley thought that it was time for a new ministry to be organized in America, in order to give the people the sacraments. Wesley, therefore, deliberately inaugurated a church polity in America.[100]

He then appointed Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over the Methodists in America, and Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them.[101] They were to "administer Baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of the Church of England."[102]

He also prepared a liturgy for the Methodists in America. He writes about this in his circular letter to "Our Brethren in America,"

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[99] See above p. 45.

[100] Journal, VII, 15 (for Sept. 1, 1784). Here Wesley writes, "Being now clear in my own mind, I took a step which I had long weighed in my mind." See also The History of American Methodism, ed. by Emory Stevens Bucke (New York & Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1964), Chapter V, "The Formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church," pp. 185ff.

[101] See Journal, VII, 15, Letters, VII, 238.

[102] See the Facsimile of Dr. Coke's ordination certificate, inserted in Journal, VII, 16-17.

> I have prepared a Liturgy little differing from that of the Church of England (I think, the best constituted National Church in the world), which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's Day in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays and praying extempore on all other days . . . If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.[103]

This liturgy was entitled: The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America, with Other Occasional Services: London: printed in the year 1784. It was an abridgment of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. He also furnished a standard of doctrine: Twenty-four Articles reduced from the Thirty-nine of the Church of England.[104] Our purpose, however, is not here to detail the formation of the American Methodist Church or to discuss all the problems involved, nor to discuss all the changes he made in this Sunday Service and new religious Articles. Our concern is limited to the revisions connected with the sacrament of baptism.

In the order for baptism in this Sunday Service, Wesley made several omissions, most of them being connected with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. For example, in the exhortation to thanks for both infant and adult baptism, Wesley omitted the word, "regenerated": he omitted the words underlined in the following,

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[103] Letters, VII, 239 (dated on Sept. 10, 1784).

[104] See Stevens, Op. cit., vol. II, p. 197f.

> Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this Child is regenerated and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God . . .[105]

Further in the thanksgiving prayer, he deleted an entire phrase thanking God for the regeneration of the child in baptism: those words underlined in the following were omitted.

> We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own Child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church.[106]

And he also did not include the concluding rubric which contains the sentence which he had quoted in his treatise on baptism of 1756:

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[105] The Sunday Service . . . (London: 1784), 142. For adult baptism see, Ibid., 148.

[106] Ibid., 142.

> It is certain by God's word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.[107]

What then is the significance of these alterations in his revision? As indicated already, some scholars maintain that these revisions prove that "Wesley now does not believe in baptismal regeneration."[108] Nevertheless, this writer feels that we must not give more emphasis to what was omitted than to what was retained in this Sunday Service. For in the order of baptism in this Sunday Service, he retained unaltered the second prayer which includes the prayer for baptismal regeneration:

> . . . that he, coming to thy holy Baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration.[109]

Again in the prayer for the Spirit, a petition is offered:

> Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation.[110]

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[107] The Book of Common Prayer, "The Ministration of Baptism in Infants." cf. Works, X, 191.

[108] Nolan B. Harmon, Jr., The Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism (Nashville, Publishing House of the M. E. Church, South, 1926), p.140. Sugden's note in Sermons, I, 282. John Bishop, Op.cit., p.114.

[109] The Sunday Service (1784), 140, see 144 for adult baptism.

[110] Ibid., 141, 145.

Further the Sunday Service retains the prayer for the sanctification of water:

> regard, we beseech thee, the supplication of thy congregation; sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin; and grant that this Child, now to be baptized, may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children . . .[111]

And in the thanksgiving prayer (in the order of adult baptism), the persons who are baptized are described as "being born again, and made heirs of everlasting salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ."[112]

Therefore, it is not necessary to understand that Wesley relinquished his early belief on baptismal regeneration, simply on account of some deletions cited. If, as some scholars claim, Wesley no longer held the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, he is then to be found in an inconsistency in retaining these passages cited above. We should therefore avoid any possibly one-sided emphasis at this point. We are not to conclude simply that Wesley now rejects his early view in 1784, on the one hand, nor to draw the conclusion, on the other hand, that those omissions were made merely for the sake of brevity of the service. Rather his omissions in this Sunday Service significantly indicate something else. For Wesley apparently prepared this liturgy very deliberately "for a land where the Episcopal Church had been shattered by war."[113]

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[111] Ibid., 141-142. 148 (for adult baptism). cf. 139, 144.

[112] Ibid., 149. Here only difference with the Book of Common Prayer is that he omitted an adverb, "now."

What then do these revisions signify in the thought of Wesley? At this point, the omissions and alterations he had made to his father's discourse on baptism in his treatise on baptism seem to shed light. That is to say, it seems that he is extending his safeguard against any magical view of the sacrament, though not in particular calling baptismal regeneration itself in question. In truth, he seems not to change one way or another concerning his high view of baptism as a means of grace to which the new birth is ordinary annexed.[114]

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[113] Peaston, Op. cit., p. 40. See Letters, VII, 239. Sanders, Op. cit., 239ff.

[114] Sermons, I, 283. For the detailed discussion as to the reasons and sources of Wesley's revision of the Prayer Book in 1784-1786, see Harmon, Op. cit., pp. 42f. Proc. W. H. S. XXIII, 123-133, Ibid., 173-175, Sanders, Op. cit., 244-246, Bard Thompson ed., Liturgies of the Western Church (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1961), 411-412.

Although many reasons and sources may be given for this revision, it must be said that these alterations would reflect his own principle and pastoral concern for his people which was in his mind. For Wesley wrote upon the changes he made in the Sunday Service; "I took particular care throughout to alter nothing for altering's sake. In

In 1786 a new edition of the Sunday Service, including the Collection of Psalms and Hymns, and the Minutes, was printed in London. This was apparently the last edition of the Wesleyan prayer book for the American Methodists.[115] In this edition, there were some few changes from the 1784 edition.[116] For example, the prayer for the sanctification of the water was swept away from the order for baptism in

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religion I am for as few innovations as possible. I love the old wine best." (Letters, VIII, 145).

[115] As to the changes in the 1786 edition, there are vexing questions whether they were made by Wesley, or by Dr. Coke or Bishop Asbury. Swift observed that some possible causes for these changes may be: "Either Wesley's own view on baptismal regeneration underwent a change, or he trimmed his sails to the American wind, or the edition was revised and seen through the press by Thomas Coke without Wesley's knowledge." (Proc. W. H. S. XXIX, p. 18). However, on the one hand, Harmon and Telford seem to maintain that this revision was made by Coke, since Wesley wrote to Mr. Walter Churchery, ". . . Dr. Coke made two or three little alterations in the Prayer Book without my knowledge." (Letters, VIII, 144-145). But, on the other hand, Barton believes with Stevens that the 1786 edition "was printed under Wesley's eye." (Stevens, Op. cit., vol. II, p. 196, see also J. Hamby Barton, "The Sunday Service of the Methodists," Proc. W. H. S. XXXII, p. 99). Barton says that "since the 1788 edition had no significant changes we can assume that Wesley is referring to the 1784 edition when he says that Dr. Coke made changes without his knowledge. (Barton, Loc. cit.) Moreover, we notice that the 1788 edition, which contains the identical baptismal Offices with that of 1786, was evidently intended for use the both sides of the Atlantic. For a copy of the 1788 editions has an article (XXIII) on "Of the Rules of the British Dominion" (The Sunday Service (London: 1788), p. 320). It seems likely that Wesley at least approved the 1786 edition. Cf. note 114 on p. 142.

[116] For this purpose we have compared the Sunday Service

the 1786 edition.[117] The words, "mystical washing away of sins," were also deleted.[118] Moreover, the second prayer and the prayer for the Spirit were entirely removed.[119] The words such as "grafted" (into the body of Christ's Church),[120] and "incorporate" (him into thy holy Church),[121] were replaced by the words, "admitted" (into the body of Christ's Church),[122] and "admit" (him into thy holy Church).[123] However, "the rite was still capable of being

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of 1784 which is in the library of Emory University (Wesleyana room) with that of 1786 which is in the library of Drew University.

[117] See The Sunday Service (1786), 145. Wesley omitted the prayer for the sanctification of the water in his treatise on baptism from his father's discourse. (Samuel Wesley, Op. cit., p. 200. cf. Works, X, 191).

[118] The Sunday Service (1786), 143, 147. cf. Ibid. (1784), 139, 144.

[119] The second prayer includes the phrase: "he (i.e., infant), coming to thy holy Baptism, may receive remission of his sins." (The Sunday Service (1784), 140). And the prayer for the Spirit has a petition: "Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again . . ." (Ibid., 141).

[120] The Sunday Service (1784), 142, 148 (in the exhortation to thanks).

[121] Ibid., 142. (in the thanksgiving prayer).

[122] Ibid. (1786), 145, 151 (in the exhortation to thanks).

[123] Ibid. (1786), 146 (in the thanksgiving prayer). The thanksgiving prayer in the order of adult baptism which described baptism as "being born again," is entirely altered in the 1786 edition.

interpreted as teaching baptismal regeneration."[124] As Sanders correctly observed, subsequent revisions made by American Methodists have been primarily concerned to "whittle away one or another instance of such language."[125] This then would show that the later American Methodists were convinced that the Sunday Service of 1786 still retained some trace of baptismal regeneration. What then Wesley intended to do with these further revisions in 1786 seems to be the extension of his pastoral guard against a wrong emphasis on the sacrament. In fact, these changes in the 1786 edition accord with his omission of the word, "sacramental" (union with Christ), or other phrases which he had deleted in his treatise on baptism.[126] In his sermons and other writings Wesley has also been drawing a distinction between the outward sign of baptism and the thing signified, inward grace. Such safe-guarding activity by Wesley is shown again in his revision of the Articles of Religion for the American Methodists which were included in the Sunday Service.

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[124] Sanders, Op. cit., p. 103.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Works, X, 188, 191. cf. Samuel Wesley, Op. cit., p. 203, 191, 207. See also above p. 122.

In his revision of Anglican Article XXVII, "Of Baptism,"[127] Wesley omitted the instrumental affirmation:

> . . . whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed . . .[128]

Stevens thought that his change indicated that Wesley now rejected the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.[129] Wheeler maintains that this shows "Wesley's purpose to avoid any endorsement of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration."[130] Wesley's emendation here, however, does not appear to support such a claim. For baptism is still declared to be "a sign of regeneration or the new birth."[131] For Wesley, the sacraments, including baptism are "not only badges or tokens of Christian Men's Profession; but rather they are certain Signs of Grace, and God's good Will toward us, by which he doth work invisibly in us."[132] Presumably God works conversion in believing adults, and regeneration in infants. What is intended by Wesley here seems to be that he is safeguarding against any possible misunderstanding the nature of the new birth in its connection to baptism. He is carefully avoiding the implication that by baptism, as by an instrument, those who are baptized are automatically grafted into the Christian life. This must be the reason why he omitted the instrumental affirmation in the Article. We notice also that he was wary of the use of phrases which might imply the identification of "baptizing" with "Christianizing." He, therefore, replaced the word, "christened" by "baptized."[133] Such caution in the mind of Wesley might also have caused him to change the title of Article XVI "Of Sin After Baptism," into "Of Sin After Justification."[134] He seemed to safeguard against any possible identification of baptism with justification.

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[127] Wheeler thinks that the changes made in the Article "Of Baptism" "are regarded as more significant than those made in the twenty-fifth." (Wheeler, Op. cit., 0.39). Anyway our discussion will be limited to the article connected with the sacrament of baptism.

[128] Article XXVII of the Church of England. cf. The Sunday Service (1784), 312, Article XVII.

[129] Stevens, Op. cit., vol. II, pp. 207-208.

[130] Wheeler, Op. cit., p. 29.

[131] Wesley's Article XVII, "Of Baptism." The Sunday Service (1784), 312.

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[132] Wesley's Article XVI, "Of the Sacraments," Ibid., 311.

[133] Anglican Article XXVII reads: "Baptism is . . . a mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened." But Wesley replaced the last word, "christened" by "baptized."

[134] Compare Anglican Article XVI with Wesley's Article XII.

As Dr. Cannon admits, the Church of England made a distinction between the outward sign and the thing signified.[135] This is what Wesley strongly affirms as the doctrinal position of the Church. But that distinction may possibly be erased by taking the sign as an "effectual" sign of grace. Therefore, he omitted strong words describing the nature of the sign in Article XXV, "Of the Sacraments."[136]

From what we have discussed, we may now safely conclude that although Wesley's revision of the baptismal offices and Article on baptism may give a superficial impression that in his later years he rejected the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, yet his real concern and intention was rather further to safeguard "his poor sheep in the wilderness,"[137] from any possible misinterpretation of baptism. This is a confirmation of that safeguarding activity which we have already found in his Treatise on Baptism, sermons, and other writings.

It seems that Wesley had not raised any particular question about his early belief on baptismal regeneration which, he thought, was the doctrinal position of the Church of England.[138] In fact, it appeared that even in his later years Wesley still considered the Church of England and her liturgy as the best in the world.[139] And in sending Dr. Coke and others with his Sunday Service to the American Methodists, one of his sincere concerns was to have them "administer Baptism . . . according to the usage of the Church of England."[140] Therefore, if Wesley's intention in revising the Offices and Article of baptism was to reject the doctrine of baptismal regeneration,[141] he himself must be inconsistent in his intention itself. So it seems just to conclude rather that however these changes might be interpreted by his followers, he himself made them "without necessarily implying any change of mind in his part,"[142] on the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

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[135] Cannon, Op. cit., p. 126.

[136] See Anglican Article XXV, "Of the Sacraments" and Wesley's Article XVI, "Of the Sacraments."

[137] Letters, VII, 239.

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[138] Although some may question whether Wesley's position on baptism was in conformity with that of the Church of England, it is true that Wesley himself claimed that his interpretation is the doctrinal position of the Church of England.

[139] See Letters, VII, 239 (dated on Sept. 10, 1784). Preface of the Sunday Service (1784, 1786, 1788).

[140] See Dr. Coke's ordination certificate, inserted between Journal, VII, 16 and 17.

[141] It is evident that Wesley held that the Church of England accepted the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

[142] Galliers, Loc. cit., (Proc. W. H. S. XXXII, p. 124).

If there is room for some difference of interpretation regarding the intention of these revisions, it would seem to be due to the fact that in providing the liturgy and the religious articles for the "poor sheep in the wilderness," Wesley was less than interested in writing a systematic theology. Rather was his concern and interest practically to safeguard them from possible wrong emphasis on the sacrament. Since his evangelical experience, Wesley's central emphasis has been on justification by faith through the inner work of the Holy Spirit. He protested against any magical view of the sacraments. Means of grace, insisted Wesley, must be used not for their own sake, but as means. In such understanding of the sacraments, he held a synthesis of the evangelical reality and the sacramental reality of Christian life until the end of his life. Therefore, it can be said about the Sunday Service,

> Whatever be the fine points of interpretation, one can scarcely doubt that the Sunday Service was cast in the tradition of the English Prayer Book . . . with certain new provisions for evangelical expressions. In his entire view of worship, Wesley drew a balance between stability of tradition and the dynamism of the Spirit.[143]

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[143] B. Thompson, ed., Op. cit., p. 414.

iv) Baptismal regeneration and Conversion

John Wesley's consuming passion in his preaching was to bring people to the evangelical experience of conversion, and to build them up from that point in earnest moral discipline. His sensitive awareness of the moral profligacy which was prevalent in his time, and his evangelical experience at Aldersgate Street, compelled him to lay stress on the necessity of evangelical conversion. Yet as we have already observed, he was a high churchman still. God's ordinances were highly regarded by him, and the people were taught not to neglect the means of grace. Yet, the means of grace, insisted Wesley, should be used "in order to the renewal of your soul in righteousness,"[144] that is, the new birth. He exhorted people:

> Let this, therefore, if you have not already experienced this inward work of God, be your continual prayer: 'Lord, add this to all thy blessings, - Let me born again! Deny whatever

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[144] Sermons, I. 260 (The Means of Grace).

> Thou pleasest, but deny not this; let me 'born from above'! Take away whatsoever seemeth Thee good - reputation, fortune, friends, health - only give me this, to be born of the Spirit, to be received among the children of God![145]

Most of the people to whom Wesley was preaching, however, were already baptized in their infancy. They apparently thought that they were born again in baptism, and so did not need to be converted now. Nevertheless, Wesley declared to them that they must be born again. He challenged them,

> Say not then in your heart, 'I was once baptized, therefore I am now a child of God.[146]
>
> it (i.e., 'the being born of God') implies not barely the being baptized, or any outward change whatever; but a vast inward change, a change, wrought in the soul, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; a change in the whole manner of our existence.[147]

He also argued with "men of reason and religion,"

> But now extremely idle are the common disputes on this head! I tell a sinner,

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[145] Sermons, II, 243 (The New Birth).

[146] Sermons, I, 295 (The Marks of the New Birth).

[147] Sermons, I, 300 (The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God).

> 'You must be born again.' 'No,' say you: 'He was born again in baptism. Therefore he cannot be born again now.' Alas, what trifling is this! What, if he was then a child of God? He is now manifestly a child of the devil; for the works of his father he doeth. Therefore, do not play upon words. He must go through an entire change of heart.[148]

Further he warned the people for their own presupposition about the matter: "Lean no more on the staff of that broken reed that ye were born again in baptism."[149]

Now this poses for us another issue to be clarified, namely, how this emphasis on conversion in Wesley's preaching is to be reconciled with his belief in baptismal regeneration in infants. In the previous sections, we concluded that Wesley maintained that although baptism is not the same as the new birth, infants who are baptized are at the same time regenerated; and adults too, if repentence and faith are present in them. What, then, is the real meaning of these passages cited above? Do they mean that Wesley is now found in contradiction to his former belief in baptismal regeneration?[150] In other words, do these passages involve that Wesley now rejects fully or in some degrees, the effect of infant baptism? The latter supposition, however, seems to have overlooked the true intention and the meaning of the passages as found in their contexts.[151] For when we carefully read them, he is found not denying the effect of infant baptism at all. In the same sermons from which we quoted these passages cited above, he says,

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[148] Works, VIII, 48 (A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion).

[149] Sermons, I. 296 (The Marks of the New Birth).

[150] Some claim that Wesley was in contradiction at this

> who denies that ye were then made children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven? But, not withstanding this, ye are now children of the devil. Therefore, ye must be born again.[152]

His emphasis upon the necessity of conversion was certainly not motivated by the fact that they were not regenerated in their baptism, but that they "do not own it," now.[153] He said,

> you have already denied your baptism; and that in the most effective manner.

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point. See Starkey, Op. cit., p. 91 and his footnote on pp. 93-94.

[151] Such misinterpretation may be due in some measure to the lack of systematic presentation of the matter on Wesley's part. We must remember that Wesley was interested in guiding people to salvation rather than a logical presentation of the doctrine.

[152] Sermons, I, 296 (The Marks of the New Birth).

[153] Sermons, II. 241 (The New Birth).

> You have denied it in thousand and a thousand times; and you do so still, day by day.[154]

It seems that Wesley believed that whenever we give place to the "devil and all his works" which we renounced in baptism, we then come to deny our own baptism; that is to say, we sin away the grace which was given in baptism.[155] Such an idea was already in his treatise on baptism where we read,

> Herein a principle of grace is infused, which will not be wholly taken away, unless we quench the Holy Spirit of God by long continued wickedness.[156]

Thus his intention expressed in these passages was not in his repudiation of the effect of baptism at all,[157] but rather to challenge people whether they now bear the fruits of baptismal grace. What he wanted to know of them was, "Do you still own baptism?" He said,

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[154] Ibid., 242.

[155] See Ibid., Journal, I. 465.

[156] Works, X, 192.

[157] That is to say, when Wesley declared that the sinner must be born again, it does not imply as some presume, that "Wesley altogether dissociated regeneration from baptism," for "regeneration for him must be a conscious experience." (John Baillie, Baptism and Conversion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 84. cf. Sparrow Simpson, Op. cit., p. 30). From what we have seen so far, it seems that he never questioned the effect of infant baptism, in which infants were made children of God and heirs of kingdom of God. He maintained that "children who are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are saved." (Works, X, 191).

> The question is not, what you was made in baptism (do not evade): but what are you now? Is the Spirit of adoption now in your heart? To your own heart let the appeal made. I ask not, whether you was born of water and of the Spirit; but are you now the temple of the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in you?[158]

The importance of constant faith, and consequently of the continuing personal responsibility of the person baptized, thus appears to the fore in his understanding of baptism. Maintenance and growth in baptismal grace is for Wesley as important as the regeneration at baptism.

Wesley believed that man is morally and spiritually responsible in playing a cooperative role with the work of the Holy Spirit. When once a man is able to act responsibly on his own behalf, the possibility of sin enters in. If he yields to original sin and persists in actual sin, to the point of repudiating his baptism he then partakes in the benefits of his baptism no longer.[159] In consequence the

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[158] Sermons, I. 295 (The Marks of the New Birth).

[159] cf. Works, X, 192. Wesley did not give any specific consideration of the question as to when a child becomes responsible for his own actions. Nevertheless, there is a

Christian life has to begin all over again. He now must be born again, whether he was once baptized or not.[160] But if the baptized person does not by his own responsible action destroy baptismal grace, then he is still in that state of grace which is expected to grow to its eschatological realization. Wesley, therefore, stresses the need and importance of attending to all the means of grace for every Christian. For the continuation and growth of the new life, man must be in a living relationship with God. For the Christian life cannot be seen in static terms, but in terms of a dynamic relation with God.

In Wesley, such understanding is "characteristic of every phase of salvation that takes place in and through man, although the ultimate initiative is always with God."[161] Therefore, whether the person baptized now owns or disowns the baptismal grace depends upon his living, constant relationship with God. Being thus occasioned by the practical problems of the religious life, Wesley's main and keen con-

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hint of his own attitude to it in his autobiographical note in his journal. There he writes, "I believe till I was about ten years old I had not sinned away that 'washing of the Holy Ghost' which was given me in baptism." (Journal, I. 465).

[160] Yet, the "convert" is not to be baptized again.

[161] Starkey, Op. cit., p. 116. See Works, VI, 511-513 (his sermon "On Working out our Own Salvation").

cern was centered on man's responsible existence here and now in relation with God.[162] For if the person does not own the baptismal grace now, "your baptism will be so far from profiting you."[163]

When we approach this issue in the light of Wesley's deep concern, we come to realize the eschatological dimension of baptism. Such understanding of baptism seems to parallel his understanding of the new birth signified by baptism. Wesley teaches that the character of spiritual life must, as in the case of natural life, be understood in terms of both an instant birth (regeneration or justification) and continuing growth (sanctification). So, in the instant of baptism, the infant is born again. This is called baptismal regeneration: for it is indeed in itself a reality, although its growth and fulfillment are anticipated in subsequent Christian life. As the baptism of Jesus Christ (which is the foundation of our baptism) was fulfilled in his cross and resurrection, so likewise our baptism looks forward to its fulfillment in our Christian life continuing to eternity - "our being risen with Christ through the powerful operation of God in the soul."[164] Therefore, it is a one-sided emphasis to speak of baptismal regeneration as it were merely a momentary event. For it has its reference to the whole of life. When these two elements are held together, it can be recognized in the deepest sense that baptism is the "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost,"[165] as well as entering into the gospel convenant with God, being admitted into the Church.[166]

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[162] Such theological system of Wesley (evangelical synergism), Starkey thinks, gives a basis for "I-Thou" nature of Christian life. (See Op. cit., p. 123).

[163] Works, VIII, 49.

However, because Wesley's main concern is upon man's responsible relation to God here and now, it can be said that in the practical sense, baptism takes effect accordingly as we daily live in Christ, "being risen with Christ,"[167] moment by moment. Only in this sense, can we fully understand Wesley's concluding sentence on the meaning of baptism in his treatise,

> Baptism doeth now save us, if we live answerable thereto; if we repent, believe, and obey the gospel: Supposing this, as it admits us into the Church here, so into glory hereafter.[168]

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[164] Notes on Col. 2:12. In fact, this was the end of Christ's institution of baptism, according to Wesley.

[165] Titus 3:5.

[166] Works, X, 191.

[167] Notes on Col. 2:12.

[168] Works, X, 192.

CHAPTER SIX

WESLEY'S DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM: II.

BAPTISM AND FAITH: THE MODE OF BAPTISM

A. BAPTISM AND FAITH

In the previous chapter it was established that Wesley emphasized (especially in his preaching) the necessity and importance of faith in the baptism of those who are "of riper years," and that in the case of adults the new birth does not always go together with baptism. However, Wesley maintained that infants are regenerated in their baptism, although they can then neither repent nor believe. We now attempt to explore the relationship between faith and baptism. What then is the role of faith in adult baptism? What are in Wesley the grounds of infant baptism? And what is the comparison of the relation of faith to baptism in adults and infants?

i) The role of faith in adult baptism

As we have already observed, for Wesley faith and baptism are inseparably related. He said that if baptism is to be accompanied by inward grace there must be faith present on the part of the recipient. In the case of adults, their baptism without faith will not bring any good to them. A condition of "believing" must be present at the moment of the administration of the sacrament, if the benefits of baptism are to be conferred to the person baptized.[1] In "Popery Calmly Considered," criticizing the Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacrament, Wesley claimed that "in order to our receiving grace, there is also required previous instruction, true repentance, and a degree of faith."[2] This would mean that faith should be present even before baptism.

Wesley further emphasized that after baptism a man must live "answerable thereto"[3] so that he may continue in the same to his life's end. This would mean that baptism demands of a man faith after baptism. From the adult (who is responsible for his own action) faith is thus demanded before and after baptism. As baptism is composed of two elements - what happens at the moment of baptism (event) and the subsequent life after baptism (progress), so likewise faith is demanded both at the moment of baptism and after baptism.[4] In this way, baptism and faith are inescapably joined. That is to say, on the one hand, "the merits of Christ's life and death are applied to us in baptism,"[5] and on the other hand, these free gifts of God are received through faith sine qua non. Thus, it seems that the necessity and importance of baptism and of faith are held together in Wesley without necessarily drawing an antithesis between the two. Yet, it seems to be important that we remember that his central concern was the baptized person's responsible life here and now in relation to God, that is, subsequent faith and morality. Therefore in the previous chapter we have suggested that Wesley's understanding of baptism must be interpreted in the light of this central concern and emphasis (on subsequent faith), in order to grasp the real comprehensive view of baptism in the thought of Wesley. Although Wesley did not elaborate at this point, it seems that by this emphasis he certainly opens the way for a correct understanding of the relation of faith to baptism. For if we put more emphasis on the faith before than after baptism, it might open the way for interpreting baptism as that in which man takes an initiative. However, when our emphasis is primarily on the faith after baptism, more than upon the former, divine initiative in baptism comes to the fore, and faith is to be understood as response to God's grace. Such understanding seems to accord with his theological structure, which has been characterized as an "evangelical synergism."[6] That is to say, in Wesley, man's cooperation with the work of God's grace for man's salvation is maintained, yet, the ultimate initiative is always with God, and man's role in this respect is regarded as a grace-given responsibility to appropriate freely the gift of God. This idea seems to become more explicit in infant baptism.

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[1] See Notes on Acts 2:38.

[2] Works, X, 149, cf. Ibid. 113.

[3] Ibid., 192.

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[4] Wesley thought that every believer, therefore, ought to say of himself: "In my baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. And I thank God who hath called me to the state of salvation. And I pray to God that I may continue in the same to my life's end." (Works, VIII, 73). See above chapter five B. iv.

[5] Works, X, 191.

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[6] Starkey, Op. cit., p. 116, see also pp. 116-123.

ii) The grounds of infant baptism, and the question of faith in baptism

We now turn to the question of infant baptism. Can infants be the proper subject of baptism, although they can neither repent nor believe at the moment of baptism? Wesley appears to be convinced of the validity of baptizing infants into the Church. In his Treatise on Baptism and Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism, he lays down some grounds of infant baptism.[7] A most significant argument for the validity of the baptism of infants seems to be drawn from the significant parallel between circumcision and baptism.[8]

Wesley maintains that "infants were and still are under the evangelical covenant"[9] God made with Abraham. God promised Abraham: "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee."[10] Wesley holds that this promise was also designed for "the infants of believers," that is, "the true children of faithful Abraham."[11] So, Wesley says that the children of Christians have the right to these blessings, and have an interest in the covenant.[12] Therefore, Wesley claims that "children should be admitted into the Church, by the Christian door of entrance, that is, baptism."[13] Thus, in the thought of Wesley, "baptism came in the room of circumcision."[14] He writes to an objector,

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[7] According to Outler, an obvious purpose of his treatise was "to re-enforce the wavering conviction of some of the Methodist people as to the validity of infant baptism." (Outler, Op. cit., p. 318), In fact, more than half of the treatise was given over to the question of infant baptism. Moreover, as we already indicated, he published a tract, entitled, Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism, in 1751. He aimed in this tract to "vindicate the practice of baptizing children" by rehearsing a few arguments used in the Church. According to Green, this tract was mainly taken from B. Wall, The History of Infant Baptism. (Green, Works of John and Charles Wesley, #149).

[8] See Works, X, 194f.

> We know God himself determined the contrary, commanding them to be circumcised at eight days old. Now, if infants were capable of being circumcised, notwithstanding that repentance and faith were

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[9] *Ibid*., 193.

[10] *Ibid*., 194.

[11] Wesley said that "Abraham is represented as the root, or stock of the visible church (both Jewish and Christian)." (*Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism*, p. 3). Thus, the covenant with Abraham was not understood in the sense of national (or racial) succession but of divine salvation-history, so that Abraham may be counted as the ancestor of the Christian Church. cf. Gen. 17:7, Gal. 3:7.

[12] *Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism*, p. 5.

[13] *Ibid*.

[14] *Works*, X, 195, 188, 194-195. Also see *Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism*, p. 5. Notes on Col. 2:11-13.

> to go before circumcision in grown persons, they are just as capable of being baptized; notwithstanding that repentance and faith are, in grown persons, to go before baptism.[15]

Wesley then went on to say that as God commanded infants to be circumcised, so likewise the baptism of infants is included in the Lord's command to

> disciple all nations, by baptizing them in the name of our Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them. And, lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.[16]

Wesley holds that this was demonstrated by Jesus, in that He suffered children to come to Him who were brought by others. "Therefore," he said, "his disciples or Ministers are still to suffer infants to come, that is, to be brought, unto Christ," by baptism.[17] Thus it appears that Wesley believed that the baptism of infants is possible because it is not only commanded by the Lord, but also because the initiative in it is with the Lord himself.[18] This would imply that baptism is an ordinance of divine, not human, inception. It is a movement from God toward man. Therefore, in the thought of Wesley, the baptism of infants cannot be interpreted in terms alone of dedication by men.

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[15] Works, X, 199.

[16] Ibid., 193.

[17] Works, X, 195. Wesley says that "But they cannot now come to him, unless by being brought into the Church; which cannot be but by baptism." He further believes that the Apostles and the Church in all ages practiced infant baptism. (See Works, X, 196f, 201, Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism, 12ff.

Where then is the place of faith in infant baptism? It seems that Wesley would draw his answer to this question from the significant parallel between circumcision and baptism. In other words, faith should hold the same place in baptism as it did in circumcision. He said, as the "infants were and still are under the evangelical covenant," so "in this covenant children were also obliged to what they knew not, to the same faith and obedience with Abraham."[19] This would then imply that, as Abraham as an adult received circumcision by faith, so from adults is demanded faith at the moment of baptism. Yet, the case of infants is different. For they were not circumcised on the basis of their own faith but on the ground of birth into the covenant community - the "visible church." So, the condition which Wesley required for an infant to be baptized seems to have been that the infant was within the community of believers, and under the care of the community, just as in the case of circumcision.

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[18] Works, X, 195f. Wesley also finds the necessity of the baptism of infants in that infants are guilty of original sin, which needs to be washed away through baptism. (Works, X, 193). This, however, calls for further discussion because he also so strongly affirms that the guilt of original sin is covered by the universal effects of the Atonement conveyed to every man at birth by the preliminary gift of the Spirit. This will be dealt in the concluding section of this chapter.

[19] Works, X, 194.

Wesley seems to have sought this in the faith of the parents who present the infant to the Church through baptism. In his "Christian Library," Wesley quoted (apparently with approval), the answer to Question 89 of the Presbyterian "Shorter Catechism":

> Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in CHRIST, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.[20]

Thus, it seems that in the thought of Wesley, the faith of the parents, together with that of the congregation gathered for the baptism, serves to indicate that the child is under the promise of God's blessing and has "an interest in this Covenant."[21] Yet, it is not suggested that the faith of parents can be represented as vicarious faith for infants, although it must be present at the moment of the baptismal event. Wesley at this point significantly disallowed the presupposition of the Prayer Book service that the infant vicariously undertook a promise in the words of the godparents.[22] Therefore, it is not surprising that Wesley omitted from the 1784 Sunday Service and its subsequent editions the entire section of the address to the sponsors, and the vows by the sponsors. This seems to indicate that the faith which is essential in baptism is that of the recipient himself, although he may only afterwards be capable of it (in the case of infants). Thus, baptism demands faith: but also baptism can lead to faith. There is also an eschatological dimension to baptism which is expressed more explicitly in infant baptism. Also baptism is understood as God's act towards man (done by the agency

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[20] Christian Library, XIV, p. 411. It seems that for Wesley the faith of the parents, in some sense, takes over in baptism the role of the godparents. Wesley appears to reject the idea of godparents. He says, "there is no mention of godfathers and godmothers in Scripture, and therefore, it cannot be said they are absolutely necessary or that baptism cannot be administered without them." ("Serious Thoughts Concerning Godfathers and Godmothers," Works, X, 507). He removed from the Sunday Service of 1784 the term "godparents" as well as the whole section of address to

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godparents and vows by godparents, and likewise from the subsequent editions of the Sunday Service.

[21] Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism, p. 5. As to the relation of an infant and his Christian parents, said Wesley: "The children of Christians were never cut off from this privilege, when their fathers were received into the Church." (Ibid., p. 4).

[22] Works, X, 508.

of the believing community), and faith as man's response to God's grace.[23]

When we compare the relation of faith to baptism in the case of an adult with the same relation in the case of an infant, there appears a complex phenomenon. We find that Wesley's emphasis and keen concern was on the faith subsequent to baptism which is primarily interpreted as response to baptism. In other words, faith after baptism is demanded in both adult and infant baptism, and regarded as more important than faith before baptism in Wesley. For his central concern was the present life of the baptized person, growing through life to maturity, no matter at what point in his life baptism has been administered.

But how is the faith before baptism, such as is demanded of adults, to be related to the corporate faith of the believing community, which is in such a particular way represented by the faith of the parents who present infants for baptism? In our previous discussion, it was confirmed that Wesley believed that the parents could not possess faith on behalf of infants. Is then faith before baptism, which is demanded from adults to be baptized, a constitutive element of baptism? It would seem that Wesley did not discuss this problem, except to admit such a difference between the place of faith in adult baptism and in infant baptism, as there was in circumcision.[24] However, this might not have appeared problematic to Wesley, a practical man who did not try to write a systematic theology of baptism. Rather it seems that on the one hand, without raising any serious question, he just accepted what the Church had done in the case of infants, and on the other hand, emphasized the necessity of faith whenever the baptized are capable and responsible. For he understood faith in terms of a living relation of man with God, without which a man cannot continue in baptismal grace.

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[23] See the prayers in the baptismal offices in the Sunday Service.

B. THE MODE OF BAPTISM

As to the mode of baptism, Wesley maintains that it may be performed either by immersion or sprinkling, in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.[25] He affirms that it is not determined by the Bible in which way baptism should be administered.[26] Therefore, he says that one cannot claim that baptism by immersion is alone valid.

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[24] Nevertheless, it may be suggested that we should endeavor to explore Wesley's position on the issue, on the basis of the implication or inference drawn from his general theological structure. For the implication of the issue seems to have some importance in the light of contemporary discussion on baptism. For if faith before baptism, such as is demanded from the adult, is to be understood as a constitutive element of baptism, then infant baptism can hardly be taken for baptism in as full sense as adult baptism. And this in consequence may open the way for the advocacy of believer's baptism only.

In his Treatise on Baptism, Wesley argues that there is no exclusive precedent for baptism by immersion, nor is this mode proved by the force of meaning of the term, "baptize."[27] He thinks that John the Baptist employed the method of sprinkling.[28] Wesley went on to say that "it is highly probable, the Apostles themselves baptized great numbers, not by dipping, but by washing, sprinkling, or pouring water."[29] The baptism of the jailor and all his household in the prison, and of Cornelius with his friends at home, seems more likely by sprinkling than by immersion.[30] And it is also more reasonable, he says, that baptism of three thousand at one time, and five thousand at another, was done by other than immersion. Wesley concludes that "the place, therefore, as well as the number, makes it highly probable that all these were baptized by sprinkling or pouring, and not by immersion."[31]

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[25] Works, X, 188.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 188-189.

[28] Ibid., see also Notes on Matt. 3:6.

[29] Works, X, 189. cf. Acts 2:41.

[30] Acts 16:33, Acts 10:44-48.

It seems thus that Wesley's inclination was towards favoring the mode of sprinkling or pouring rather than immersion, although in his early ministry he was strict in observing the mode of immersion.[32] He appears to think that sprinkling has more significance than any other mode. For he believed that the baptismal water is a figure of that which God promised in making a new covenant with the spiritual Israel; "even to 'give them a new heart and a new spirit, to sprinkle clean water upon them!"[33] Moreover, he thought that the term, "baptism," in its natural sense is not taken for dipping but "washing or cleansing."[34] Therefore, it is not surprising that in his 1784 and subsequent editions of the Sunday Service, Wesley mentioned the mode of sprinkling in the baptismal offices.[35] Wesley then authorized in Methodism what had been technically an exceptional practice in the Church of England.[36]

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[31] Works, X, 190. He further thought that this mode had many biblical references. See Notes on Heb. 10:22, I Cor. 10:2, Mk. 10:38, 7:4. Works, X, 189.

[32] Journal, I, 210 n, 211 n. cf. Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 235.

[33] Works, X, 191, see also Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism, p. 23.

[34] Works, X, 189, see Notes on Mk. 7:14.

Nevertheless, it does not mean that Wesley denies the validity of other modes. He rather leaves to the desire of the parents or the person to be baptized the mode to be used in the baptism.[37] To prove this, he on one occasion employed different methods at the same baptismal service.[38] He also writes,

> I believe infants to be baptized; but, this may be done either by dipping or sprinkling. If you are otherwise persuaded, be so still, and follow your own persuasion.[39]

Thus Wesley required no uniformity in the rite of baptism, but only that the persons to be baptized "fear God and work righteousness as was observed."[40] He said in his letter to

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[35] *The Sunday Service* (1784), p. 142, the 1786 edition, p. 151. For the revision of the mode of baptism in the Sunday Service, see A. Elliott Peaston, "Sprinkling as a Baptist Usage," in *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, Jan. 1966, p. 51.

[36] See *Journal*, I, 211 n, 210 n.

[37] *Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism*, p. 22.

[38] *Journal*, IV, 302.

[39] *Sermons*, II, 139 (Catholic Spirit).

[40] *Works*, VII, 281 (The Ministrial Office).

Gilbert Boyce, a Baptist minister,

> You think the mode of baptism is 'necessary to salvation': I deny that even baptism itself is so; if it were, every Quaker must be damned, which I can in no wise believe. I hold nothing to be (strictly speaking) necessary to salvation but the mind which was in Christ. . . . I do not conceive that unity in the outward modes of worship is so necessary among the children of God that they cannot be children of God without it, although I once thought it was.[41]

Such an attitude of Wesley toward the mode of baptism accords with his view on the means of grace in general. As we already pointed out, Wesley stressed the necessity and importance of the means of grace, but at the same time he recognized that God's operation of grace cannot be confined to certain fixed forms or modes. For God is the author of all grace, and is above all means.[42] Moreover he claims that all ordinances of God are significant when used in subservience to His simple purpose of bringing man to Christ.[43] In the thought of Wesley, the necessity and importance of the means of grace, and God's freedom in His operation through the Holy Spirit, are thus held together. For Wesley naturally the most important thing in baptism was the inner baptism of the Holy Spirit which is signified by sprinkling of water in baptism.[44]

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[41] Letters, III, 36.

[42] Sermons, I, 259, 243-259.

[43] See above p. 98.

C. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In chapter five and in this chapter we have endeavored to present Wesley's own understanding of baptism, and to clarify some problems raised by differing interpretations among Wesley scholars.

The definition and meaning of baptism: Wesley regarded baptism as a means of grace obligatory to all Christians, as Jesus Himself showed by example to us.[45] Baptism, according to Wesley, is included in the whole design of Christ's great commission, and it must, therefore, remain in Christ's Church until the end of the world.

Wesley believed that baptism, an initiatory sacrament, is in the ordinary way "the only means of entering into the Church or into heaven."[46] That is to say, Wesley believed that the free gift and merit of the Atonement is applied to men in baptism,[47] through the work of the Holy Spirit. As to the benefits of baptism, he said that through baptism we are engrafted into Christ the Word, that is, into the new covenant of God, being admitted into the Body of Christ. Also the guilt of original sin is washed away from us, by the application of the merits of Christ's death. He further says that through baptism we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, through whom we begin a new life and grow throughout Christian life to maturity. These benefits, moreover, may be expressed in the words, "baptismal regeneration." He writes,

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[44] See Notes on Matt. 3:6, *Sermons*, II, 237-238, cf. Starkey, *Op*. *cit*., pp. 52, 94, 143.

[45] See Notes on Matt. 3:15, 16.

[46] *Works*, X, 192.

> By water then as a means, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again: whence it is also called by the Apostle; 'the washing of regeneration.'[48]

Clearly Wesley accepted the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. He claimed that his understanding of the doctrine accorded with the doctrinal position of the Church of England. Nevertheless, his interpretation of the doctrinal position of the Church of England, as we have pointed out, seems to bring an element of novelty into traditional

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[47] *Ibid.*, 191.

[48] *Ibid.*, 192.

Christianity, as he understood it.[49] This seems to have come to expression through his desire to safeguard the people from any possible wrong emphasis upon the doctrine.

We have observed that on the one hand Wesley has safeguarded the sacrament against any view bordering on magic, by carefully distinguishing the outward sign of baptism from inward grace, the thing signified. He held the doctrine that baptismal regeneration simultaneously occurs with baptism, rather than that the water of baptism mystically washes away sins of the recipient. Such safeguard was reflected in his omissions and alterations of the words of his father's discourse on baptism in his Treatise on Baptism, as well as in his sermons and tracts. We also observed such safeguard in his revision of the Offices, and the Article on baptism, in the Sunday Service of 1784, and subsequent editions.

On the other hand, Wesley safeguard his teaching against an external view of the sacrament, by emphasizing the necessity and importance of faith in relation to baptismal regeneration. This was mainly reflected in his sermons. In the words of a classic Christian standard, he maintained that "The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that administers them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them."[50] So, he strongly emphasized that a man must believe whenever he is capable and responsible of faith. Therefore, in baptism an adult must repent and believe, if the new birth is then to be given him. Moreover, he strongly emphasized that the baptized person must have a constant faith, otherwise he no longer continues in his own baptism. Thus, a high view of baptism as a means of grace,[51] and an emphasis on the necessity and importance of faith are in Wesley held together without drawing an antithesis between the two.

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[49] In this sense, it may appear problematic whether Wesley fully agreed with the doctrinal position of the Church of England, especially the general practice in the Church. But it is not our concern here to clarify this matter, except to explore how Wesley himself understood the

Because of Wesley's so great emphasis to his people (who had already been baptized in their infancy) on faith and the necessity of "being born again", some scholars suspect that Wesley came to reject the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Such suspicion also inclines us to

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doctrine.

[50] A Christian Library, XIV, p. 409. "An Extract from the Assembly's Shorter Catechism," Answer to Question 85.

[51] **Works**, X, 191. He maintained that the benefits of Atonement are applied to us in baptism.

think that his revision of the Offices and Articles on baptism in the 1784 Sunday Service, and the subsequent editions, indicates the change of his view with regard to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. However, we came to the conclusion that what Wesley intended in his sermons (in which the necessity of conversion was emphasized), and in his revision of the baptismal Offices and Articles in the 1784 Sunday Service, was not to reject the value of infant baptism.[52] Rather it was his pastoral safeguard against a wrong implication of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Here he warned against the idle notion that since one was born again in baptism, he does not need to be converted, although "he is now manifestly a child of the devil."[53] What he pointed out here about regeneration at baptism was that baptism (that is to say, the new birth at baptism) is the beginning of a new life, and that its maintenance and growth depend after baptism on the responsible life of the baptized person in his living relation with God. Therefore, if the baptized person in sin now follows the devil, he comes virtually to deny his own baptism. Baptism then becomes "the broken staff of that ye were born again in baptism."[54] Thus, the grace of God (baptismal grace) is not understood in impersonal terms as though it were a quasi-material substance which is given at baptism and remains forever within man's soul. But it is understood in terms of an interpersonal relation between God and man through the work of the Holy Spirit.[55]

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[52] It appears that Wesley did not raise any serious question at the effect of infant baptism. He still thought that baptism, instead of confirmation, is a sufficient qualification for the admission to the Lord's Supper.

[53] Works, VIII, 48, cf. Sermons, II, 241 (The New Birth).

The implication here may thus be that in the understanding of Wesley baptism has an inclusive nature which covers both that which happens at the moment of baptism (regeneration) and the whole of the baptized person's life (sanctification). And baptism also has an eschatological dimension in the sense that the inward grace given at the moment of baptism is to be expected to grow, through a constant and living relationship of man with God, towards its fulfillment. His central concern and emphasis was in consequence on this dimension of progress, and on the responsible life of the baptized person here and now, no matter at what point of his life he was baptized.[56] Therefore, it is to be recommended that the thought of Wesley on the meaning of baptism needs to be approached through his concluding sentence of his Treatise on Baptism,

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[54] Sermons, I, 296 (The Marks of the New Birth).

[55] See Sermons, I,310-312. For this Starkey says, the "interpersonal nature of the spiritual life is central to Wesley's understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit." (Op. cit., p.56). However, we must admit that Wesley often used the traditional terms which might imply somewhat of a quasi-material view of grace and sin, although he may have used them without critical consideration of the possible implication. For example, he said about baptismal grace: "Herein a principle of grace is infused, which will not be wholly taken away . . ." (Works, X, 192). Nevertheless, it seems that generally speaking Starkey is right on this, when we view the matter in the light of his "evangelical synergism."

> Baptism doeth save us, if we live answerable thereto; if we repent, believe, and obey the gospel: Supposing this, as it admits us into the Church here, so into glory hereafter.[57]

Infant baptism and the relation of faith to baptism: Faith and baptism are thus inseparably joined in Wesley's understanding of baptismal regeneration. Faith is the *sine qua non* of the promise of inward grace on the one hand, and on the other hand grace is associated with baptism.[58] Therefore, faith is demanded from a man who is capable of it both before and after baptism.

However, we observed that the case is somewhat different in the baptism of infants, for they cannot either believe or repent at the moment of baptism, although afterwards they are capable of it. Wesley's emphasis on faith (on the part of the recipient) is, therefore, applied only to faith after baptism, for which alone baptized infants can be responsible. Thus faith in baptism is, in the case of infant baptism, more explicitly interpreted primarily as a response to baptism. Baptism rather demands faith than faith does baptism. In this sense, baptism is the very starting point of faith.

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[56] It may be worth mentioning here that this inclusive and eschatological dimension of baptism parallels the nature of the baptism of Jesus, which is the foundation of our baptism (Notes on I John 5:6, Rom. 6:3,4) and the intention of Christ's institution of baptism (Notes on Col. 2:12).

[57] *Works*, X, 192.

[58] cf Notes on Acts 2:38, I Cor. 12:13, Gal. 3:27.

The precondition of faith which Wesley required for an infant to be baptized was instead sought in the faith of the parents who present the infant to the Church through baptism. Here the stress was on the corporate faith of the believing community which was represented in such a particular way by the faith of the parents, although this faith cannot be presented as a vicarious faith on behalf of the infant.

Despite such a difference, Wesley appears to be convinced of the validity of baptizing the infants in the Church. Part of his certainty that infants are capable of baptism was drawn from the significant parallel between circumcision and baptism. For Wesley believed that baptism came in the place of circumcision. He also believed that the baptism of infants was commanded by the Lord. And, he believed, the Apostles and the Church in all ages practiced the baptism of infants.

Moreover Wesley maintained that infants, indeed, are "justified in baptism, although they cannot then either believe or repent."[59] This view corresponded with his belief that infants are also guilty of original sin, which in the ordinary way needs to be washed away from them through baptism. It seems that Wesley never questioned this in any particular way. Rather he appears simply to have accepted the teaching and customary practice of the Church.[60]

The mode of baptism: As to the mode of baptism, Wesley in his early years appears to have been strict in insistence upon immersion, but in his mature period he rather inclined toward sprinkling or pouring.[61] However, he was never dogmatic about any particular mode of baptism. He maintained that it is to be chosen by the desire of the parents or the person to be baptized.[62]

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[59] Works, VIII, 52.

[60] Nevertheless, it seems to this writer that his teaching at this point poses the problem in serious fashion, when his doctrine is reviewed in the light of his theological structure. This will be discussed at the end of this section.

[61] See Journal, I, 167, 210n, 211n. Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 235, Works, X, 191, Notes on Matt. 3:6, Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism, p. 23. Sanders, Op. cit., p. 112.

[62] Thoughts upon Infant-Baptism, p. 22.

Baptism in the scheme of Wesley's theology of salvation: Now we turn to review Wesley's doctrine of baptism in the light of his theological structure. We pointed out that for Wesley baptism is understood both as event(in which regeneration occurs)[63] and as process (in which the growth of a new life is emphasized: sanctification). Thus baptism covers the whole of the Christian life: justification, regeneration, and sanctification. Yet his keen concern was in the dimension of process in baptism, and for Wesley baptism is only completed when the believer is wholly conformed to the image of Christ.[64]

In conceiving of baptism in this way, it seems that on the one hand his main interest in sanctification was rightly reflected in his understanding of baptism, and on the other hand, he was able to keep the teaching of baptism in close parallel with his theological structure of "evangelical synergism." That is to say, he preserved both God's continuing work of grace and man's standing responsibility.

God's operation of grace in man, for Wesley, is understood in terms of what Starkey has called "evangelical synergism."[65] In truth, it is characteristic of every phase of salvation in Wesley's theological structure. Wesley was able to maintain this by his doctrine of grace, especially of prevenient grace. He believed that all men are "obnoxious to the guilt and punishment of Adam's transgression."[66] However, Wesley also firmly believed that by the atonement of the Christ, the second Adam, "all men are cleared from the guilt of Adam's actual sin,"[67] and "No man will ever perish eternally merely for the sin of Adam."[68] Wesley calls this prevenient grace.[69] According to him, by this grace man is now under a covenant of grace, and is endowed with an ability of grace on the basis of which he can appropriate the free gift of God.[70]

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[63] Wesley held that in the moment of baptism, the guilt of original sin is washed away from the baptized person, he being grafted into the Body of Christ. He also received the Holy Spirit in baptism.

[64] See Notes on Col. 2:12.

However, when his teaching of baptism is reviewed in light of this structure of theology, it seems that his teaching of baptism faces the problem. First of all, a problem is raised as to how his understanding of baptism is to be related to the doctrine of prevenient grace. For his teaching of the baptismal cleansing of the guilt of original sin can hardly be understood, when it is asserted that by prevenient grace the guilt of original sin "is cancelled by the righteousness of Christ as soon as they(i.e., the people)are sent into the world."[71] It seems that Wesley himself did not see through the implication of this theological position for his teaching of baptism, and failed to bring the doctrine of baptism into a logical consistency with this part of his theological structure. In his sermon on "The Means of Grace," he defined the sacraments as "the ordinary channels whereby He might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace."[72] However, it appears that nowhere has he considered the relationship of baptism to prevenient grace.

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[65] Starkey, Op. cit., p. 116. See also Wesley's sermon "On Working Our Own Salvation," (Works, VI, 506 ff).

[66] Works, X, 190, 193, See also, Ibid., IX, 332, 279f, 418, 458, 262, 275-82, 378, 428f, Ibid., XI, 384, Notes on Rom. 5:12, I Cor. 15:47, Sermons, I, 323.

[67] Works, VIII, 277. Notes on Rom. 5:14.

[68] Works, IX, 315, 303, Letters, VI, 239-240.

[69] Works, VI, 512, Sermons, I, 141 n.

[70] Works, VIII, 289, Ibid., VI, 511 ff.

Secondly, Wesley has not considered the relation of his teaching of baptism to the doctrine of assurance, which is associated with his understanding of Christian life. The doctrine of assurance is a distinctive element in his teaching concerning Christian life. "Wesley affirms that what the Spirit hath wrought, the Spirit will confirm."[73] Wesley explained this doctrine as two-fold in nature; "the witness of the Spirit," and "the witness of our own spirit."[74] But instead of relating the doctrine of assurance "with Luther, to the 'I am baptized', as well as to the present witness of the Holy Spirit, Wesley related it only to the latter."[75] In this matter, it would seem that Wesley did not relate the objective significance of baptism to every phase of Christian life, although he maintained that baptism covered the whole of Christian life.[76]

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[71] *Letters*, VI, 240.

[72] *Sermons*, I, 242 (The Means of Grace).

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[73] Starkey, Op. cit., p. 60. cf. Sermons, I, 209.

[74] See sermons on "The Witness of the Spirit" (Sermons, I, 199ff, II, 341ff), "The Witness of Our Own Spirit" (Sermons, I, 219 ff). By "the witness of the Spirit," Wesley means "an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God." (Ibid., I, 208). And Wesley holds "the witness of our own spirit" as a correlate with the former. It is actually an inference which man draws from the inward and outward change in the Christian's life by the Holy Spirit's work. (See, Ibid., I, 205, 227ff, II, 346). According to Wesley, this witness consists of "a good conscience" and the observed fruits of the Spirit on Christian life, "even, 'love, peace, joy' (Ibid., II, 358)."

[75] Colin Williams, Op. cit., p. 120.

[76] Some would perhaps wish that Wesley had related baptism with his doctrine of assurance so as to provide for the baptized person the assurance of the fact that God had promised saving grace for him, declared in baptism, on which he could rely.

Thirdly, a problem is raised as to how the baptismal grace of regeneration can be conveyed to infants irresistibly, when they cannot either repent or believe. Is this not inconsistent with his theological structure, namely, "evangelical synergism"? For Wesely firmly maintained that "it (i.e., faith) was necessary in order to receive forgiveness or salvation."[77] As we already pointed out, in safeguarding the Church's doctrine against a magical view of the sacrament, Wesley maintained that baptism can be effectual means for salvation,

> not from any virtue in them, or in him that administers them, but only by the blessing of CHRIST, and the working of his SPIRIT in them that by faith receive them.[78]

He also rejected any idea of vicarious faith on behalf of infants in baptism. Therefore, in view of such theological principle, it can hardly be maintained that infants are regenerated in baptism, the guilt of original sin being washed away.

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[77] _Works_, X, 279. In 1779 Wesley wrote that "It is now upwards of forty years since my brother and I were convinced of that important truth, which is the foundation of all real religion, that 'by grace we are saved through faith.'" (_Works_, XI, 492, "Thoughts on Salvation by Faith.")

[78] _A Christian Library_, XIV, 409. He also said in one of his sermons, "Settle this in your heart, that the _opus operatum_, the mere _work done_, profiteth nothing; that there is no _power_ to save but in the Spirit of God, no _merit_ but in the blood of Christ; that, consequently, even what God ordains, conveys no grace to the soul, if you trust not in Him alone." (_Sermons_, I, 259).

Parris suggests that "Wesley may have regarded baptismal grace as conveyed to them (i.e., infants) irresistibly, after the pattern of prevenient grace."[79] But we must carefully remember that in Wesley's teaching the operation of baptismal grace was much more than that which prevenient grace does for everyone "free in all, and free for all."[80] Moreover, according to Wesley, such grace ("the proper Christian salvation") can be received only through grace by faith.[81] This was, in fact, a new emphasis he held since his evangelical experience in 1738. Such an attitude of Wesley is again expressed in his criticism of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacraments. He said,

> Nay, it is not enough that we do not put an obstruction. In order to our receiving grace, there is also required . . . a degree of faith; and even then the grace does not spring merely ex opere operato: . . . but

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[79] Parris, Op. cit., p. 54.

[80] Works, VII, 373.

[81] Works, VI, 509. Wesley means by "the proper Christian salvation "both justification" and sanctification. "By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God." (Works, VI, 509).

> from the blessing of God, in consequence of his promise to such as are qualified for it.[82]

In view of such a situation, it would seem that Wesley is not wholly consistent at every point. What he has to say about the meaning of baptism as incorporation into the Body of Christ is more consistent with his general theological structure, but he did not go on to develop this train of argument. That is to say, his teaching of baptismal regeneration would be chiefly of a change of relation by which infants (or adults) are translated into the kingdom of grace, the Church,[83] meaning adoption rather than "being born again" in baptism. In one place, Wesley indicated that the regeneration which is ascribed to baptism is that "being 'grafted into the body of Christ's Church, we are made the children of God by adoption and grace'."[84] This writer feels that this idea in Wesley, when fully amplified, may furnish a clue to the direction in which the main meaning of baptism might have been explained in a more consistent way.[85]

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[82] Works, X, 149.

[83] See Notes on Matt. 4:17. Wesley observes that the business of Christ was not only to establish the kingdom of grace in individuals, but also in the Church, the whole body of believers.

[84] Works, X, 191-192. See also Notes on Rom: 6:3. Here Wesley says, "In Baptism we, through faith, are ingrafted into Christ; and we draw new spiritual life from this new root, through His Spirit, who fashions us unto Him, and

Wesley was an evangelist, yet he was always a Churchman. He never underestimated the importance of the Church. For Wesley the Church is regarded as the Body of Christ, and he had a high regard for the body of believers, in the covenant of grace. In view of such high view of the Church, the incorporation into the Church through baptism is very significant and meaningful. For where baptism is undertaken there is an anticipation that the baptized person will grow, in the environment of faith where the Holy Spirit is promised to work, to the appropriation of the free gift of God's grace, and in consequence, to the final salvation of the soul.

In understanding the meaning of baptism in this way, it comes to be regarded chiefly as a corporate act of the Church, acting *pro Deo* to witness the objective givenness of the gospel of redemption (prevenient grace given already, and justifying, sanctifying grace, promised to faith), by setting the one to be baptized apart within the kingdom of grace, the Body of Christ. In this sense, baptism may be

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particularly with regard to His death and resurrection."

[85] We observed that by way of evangelical safeguarding of the doctrine of baptism, in his revision of the Sunday Service, the idea of incoporation into the Church in baptism

said as "Kerygma in action"[86] or "a Sacrament of the Gospel.[87] And also the role of faith in baptism is significantly understood as man's response to baptism (God's action), whereby the baptized persons appropriate and grow in the grace which is proclaimed and promised in baptism.[88] If, as Wesley himself understood, in baptism some were "born again in the higher sense of the word," and some, "in a lower sense," and also some "neither in one sense nor the other,"[89] this would be related to the degree of faith (understood as response to God's grace in its nature) on the part of the baptized persons.[90]

Thus, by this reinterpretation of the meaning of baptism in Wesley, it may be possible that the doctrine of

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appeared in some sense to the fore in his teaching of baptism. Nevertheless, he never thoroughly worked it out.

[86] Flemington, Op. cit., p. 123.

[87] Ibid., p. 124.

[88] Such understanding could be applied to the case of both infant and adult baptism. Therefore, baptism cannot be regarded as mere token of man's faith; in consequence, this view would not concur with the position of the advocacy of believer's baptism only.

[89] Journal, II, 135.

[90] For Wesley's understanding of the degree of faith, see Journal, II, 328. For some different effects occurred in baptism, see Journal, III, 180, 189, Ibid., IV, 189, Ibid., VII, 132.

baptism will be found to be in harmony with the scheme of his theology of salvation. For the scheme of salvation which Wesley explains may be found in his own words as follows:

> Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) Preventing grace; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life; some degree of salvation; . . .
> Salvation is carried on by convincing grace, usually in Scripture termed repentance; . . . Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation; whereby, 'through grace,' we 'are saved by faith;' consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God.[91]

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[91] Works, VI, 509.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE OF WESLEY'S TEACHING, ESPECIALLY IN THE MISSIONARY CHURCH OF KOREA

It has been the concern of this dissertation to analyse and clarify Wesley's teaching on baptism, with the conviction that such study is relevant to our present concern within Methodism regarding the theology of baptism,[1] as well as to the renewed interest in the subject within the ecumenical movement.[2]

The main influences which formed Wesley's doctrine of baptism were the Church of England, the ancient Christian Church, largely mediated through the Nonjurors, and also the Moravians. However these may in effect be reduced to two, namely, the Church of Wesley's upbringing, and that contact with the Moravians which helped him to come to the experience of evangelical conversion in 1738.

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[1] This was considered in chapter II. See above pp. 40-48.

[2] This was surveyed in chapter I. See above pp. 2-37.

Brought up in the high church tradition, Wesley consciously showed his high churchmanship chiefly in his reverence for the sacraments of the Church. His experience of evangelical conversion at Aldersgate Street in 1738, however, provided a turning point in Wesley's career.[3] He began his evangelical mission, emphasizing the importance of living faith.

We have observed, however, that Wesley did not with this new emphasis abandon his high churchmanship. Rather he gathered into himself in a creative tension the valuable elements from both, making a constructive synthesis of sacramentalism and the Protestant emphasis on faith. This seems to be an underlying unity which we may find in his theology of the sacraments.

Wesley insisted upon the importance and necessity of the means of grace. He stressed that "all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the means which He hath ordained."[4] But on the other hand, in order to prevent the sacramental means from being mistaken as ends in themselves, Wesley insisted that for the efficacy of the sacrament it is necessary for man to respond in faith to God's free gift,[5] although man's action was never to be regarded as a meritorious work. Moreover, Wesley made it clear that the sacraments should be used as means, not as ends in themselves, by upholding the freedom and sovereignty of God. He taught that God's normal way is to work through established means, but we cannot say that God's operation of grace is confined to certain fixed forms or means. For God is the Author of all grace, and "He does whatsoever and whensoever it pleaseth Him."[6] Thus Wesley regarded the means of grace neither too highly nor yet too meanly. Rather are they sacramental instruments which are to be used in subservience to the true end of religion - "the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness."[7]

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[3] Philip Watson, The Message of the Wesleys (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964), pp. 11-12.

[4] Sermons, I, 245, cf. Works, VIII, 271. Outler therefore says that for Wesley "grace is typically sacramental." (Outler, Op. cit., p. 33, cf. Sermons, I, 238.)

Such tension between Catholic and Evangelical elements is maintained throughout his teaching concerning baptism. Following the traditional view, Wesley places the beginning of the Christian life at baptism. Baptism, says Wesley, is the initiatory sacrament in which the merits of the atonement of Christ are applied to us.[8] Therefore, for him baptism is a means of grace which is obligatory to all Christians.

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[5] See Sermons, I, 259, Works, X, 113, 149. A Christian Library, XIV, 409.

[6] Sermons, I, 259, 243.

[7] Ibid., 260.

[8] Works, X, 191.

Wesley accepted the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Yet he qualified his understanding of baptismal regeneration by safeguarding the doctrine against possible wrong emphasis. He, on the one hand, repudiated any view bordering on a magical notion of the operation of baptismal grace, emphasizing the importance of faith in baptism. On the other hand he rejected that extreme doctrine which regards baptism as barely a badge or token of man's profession. Wesley appeared to have sought a *via media* between the two, maintaining a creative tension between the Catholic or "given" emphasis on the sacrament and the Evangelical emphasis on man's faith. The former element is strongly expressed in his teaching on infant baptism, and the latter emphasis more explicitly in that on adult baptism. Although no complete or entirely satisfactory solution of the relation between faith and baptismal grace was ever effected by Wesley, he succeeded in stressing the necessity of both elements.

Wesley approached baptism both as "event" and "progress." He equated baptism with the new birth in the sense that infants who are baptized are at the same time regenerated. It was generally acknowledged that "the Anglican position was quite definite in regarding Baptism as the event in which regeneration occurred."[9] Many people in Wesley's time, therefore, regarded themselves as Christians simply because they were baptized. Some furthermore appeared to consider that they did not need "conversion" although they were manifestly living in immorality. Wesley challenged such an idle notion. Safeguarding the doctrine against such error, Wesley's emphasis came to lay more stress upon the progressive aspect of baptism. To this emphasis also corresponded his central keen concern upon the spiritually and morally responsible life to be lived by the baptized person here and now in his relation to God. So strong was this emphasis that some have thought that Wesley possibly abandoned his earlier doctrine of baptismal regeneration.[10] But we have observed that he did not do so. Rather did he fail to raise any particular question at this point. The fact is that Wesley still maintained the "event" of baptism within the "progress," although his concern and emphasis came to be on the latter.

Here it may be safe to say that Wesley's new emphasis on present living faith was maintained within the main stream of orthodox development. In other words, "Methodists are not Dissenters."[11] A leading significance of his baptismal teaching for the contemporary church may be found in his evangelical zeal for "the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness."[12]

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[9] Parris, Op. cit., p. 55.

[10] See chapter V, sec. B, ii. cf. Cannon, Op. cit., pp. 126-128.

Wesley was an evangelist of holiness, claiming that the purpose of Methodist existence is "to spread scriptural holiness over the land."[13] To his helpers Wesley gave the charge:

> You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most. Observe: It is not your business to preach so many times, . . . but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord.[14]

To this single purpose everything in Wesley appears to be subordinated. To Wesley baptism was an evangelical opportunity to challenge the people already baptized to maintain and grow in constant faith, to the fulfillment of their own baptism. When he preached on the new birth he therefore often turned to discuss his hearers' baptism. This means, as already indicated repeatedly, that his high view of the sacraments was not abandoned on account of the fervor of his evangelism, but rather in the evangelical revival the traditional means of grace were enlisted in the service of evangelical zeal. Bowmer says of this: "It is one of the glories of the Methodist revival."[15]

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[11] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 204. The Deed of Union reads: "The doctrinal standard of the Methodist Church are as follows: The Methodist Church claims and cherishes its place in the Holy Catholic Church which is the Body of Christ . . ." Minutes, 1932, p. 302 quoted by Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 204.

[12] Sermons, I, 260.

[13] Works, VIII, 299.

[14] Large Minutes, Works, VIII, 310.

A dangerous tendency in the Church today appears to be the way in which some draw an antithesis between the evangelical and sacramental, as though these are mutually exclusive. Evangelicalism often tends to lay so strong a stress on the free individual approach in personal faith to God as to devalue the significance of the sacraments in Christian life. This tendency, if it goes to the extreme, may fall into a kind of "spiritualism," in the sense of being cut off from that which takes place in history. In other words, the divine confrontation of man in and through the historical context, in the incarnate Jesus Christ, and thereafter in the means of grace, is minimized. Such tendency may threaten the very understanding of faith itself. Unless it is made clear to man sacramentally that God acts in history for our sake, there is a danger of destroying the Christian faith as historical faith, that is, as faith which arises in an historical encounter.

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[15] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 188.

Such a tendency appears to be evident, in some measure, in the evangelicalism of the writer's own Korean church. In his most recent book, Christianity and Korean Thought, S. B. Yun, professor of systematic theology at the Korean Methodist Theological Seminary in Soul, Korea, has observed that generally speaking the Korean Church strongly maintained the Protestant principle - "by faith alone," but that the significance of the sacraments has been well-nigh ignored. He goes on to say that the sacraments are widely regarded by Korean Christians as of not more than figurative significance, their objective sacramental meaning being largely forgotten.[16] A most recent survey concerning the practice of the sacraments in the Korean Church carried out by a Presbyterian minister concurs with S. B. Yun's comment, recording that while Korean Presbyterians are strongly Calvinistic in their general theology, their practical views on the sacraments are typically Zwinglian.[17]

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[16] S. B. Yun, Dr. Theol., Christianity and Korean Thought (Korean edition, Soul, Korea: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1964), p. 248.

In the Korean Church, baptism is widely practiced as a church custom when a new member is taken into the church, even though the church may not have an adequate theological understanding of the meaning of baptism.[18] The Lord's Supper is customarily celebrated only once or twice a year, and sometimes not even once.[19] In the Korean Church, baptism is far from being used as an evangelical opportunity. Baptism is scarcely mentioned from Korean pulpits in evangelical preaching, to challenge after the manner of Wesley, the people who are already baptized.

Such a tendency in the Korean Church may be due in great measure to the particular background of the church. Generally speaking, the Korean Church has been evangelistic, and indeed revivalistic in her character. For in the first place, the missionary work in Korea was begun by "American missionaries of puritan zeal (Presbyterian) and Wesleyan fervor (Methodist),"[20] while the foundation of the organized church was significantly laid down in the great revival which occurred in 1903-1909. This movement was started by a small group of Methodist missionaries led by R. A. Hardie of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and it rapidly and forcefully spread to the whole land of Korea. This revival virtually came to be "the spiritual seal on the founding charter of the Korean church."[21]

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[17] Christian Thought (a monthly journal issued interdenominationally by the Christian Literature Society of Korea in Seoul, Korea), vol. 8, no. 9, (Oct., 1964), p. 54.

[18] S. B. Yun, Op. cit., p. 248.

[19] Ibid., p. 175.

[20] L. George Paik, Ph.D., The History of Protestant

One of the results of this great revival was "the establishment of religious habits" according to the pattern of revival meetings.[22] L. George Paik has said that as "the genesis of the movement was in connection with conferences for Bible study and prayer among the missionaries,"[23] so that Bible study and prayer acquired a chief place in the religious life of the Korean Christians.

The revival naturally gave a new and great impetus to evangelism. The second great revival which occurred in

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Missions in Korea, 1832-1910 (Ph.D. dissertation at Yale University, Korea: Union Christian College Press, 1929), p. 354.

[21] Samuel H. Moffett, The Christians of Korea (New York: Friendship Press, 1962), p. 54. For the account of this great revival, see Paik, Op. cit., pp. 354-365, S. B. Yun, Op. cit., pp. 189-198. Chongho Byun, A History of the Korean Christian Church (Korean edition, Korea: Sim Woo Won Press, 1959), pp. 56-65.

[22] George Paik, Op. cit., p. 363.

[23] Ibid. For the brief account of this revival, see Moffett, Op. cit., pp. 52-53.

1909-1910 was started by a small group of Methodist missionaries led by M. B. Stokes. This turned out to be a nation-wide evangelistic campaign, sponsored by all the Protestant churches then in Korea, and called "the million souls movement."[24] Revivalism and evangelism now went hand in hand, so as to become the characteristic of the Korean Church. These revivals have been followed by others, down to the modern period.

Such revivalistic evangelism in the Korean Church provided on the one hand the strength with which she could victoriously endure even the dark days of difficulty and persecution, yet on the other hand with it the Church tended to lean too much towards a pietistic sectarianism, and moralistic or emotional individualism, in which the meaning of the sacraments and corporate worship is hardly appreciated in church life. Though a British writer in the London Times "compared the 'extraordinary manifestation of power in Korea' with the revival of John Wesley,"[25] the Korean revivalism failed from the beginning to maintain that healthy combination of sacramentalism and evangelism which was characteristic of Wesley. Such synthesis was dissolved in Korean evangelism, whereas Wesley's movement was great enough to comprehend both the sacramental and the evangelical so as to be "a revival of all that is vital in experimental and historical Christianity."[26]

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[24] For the account of this second revival and evangelical campaign, see S. B. Yun, Op. cit., pp. 192-194. For the statistics of the result of this movement, see Alfred Wasson, Church Growth in Korea (New York: International Missionary Council, 1934), pp. 59-62.

[25] Moffett, Op. cit., p. 52. S. B. Yun also comments on the first two great revivals as the extension (or sequel) of the Wesleyan movement. (Op. cit., p. 186).

However there is more recently a rising recognition among some Korean churchmen of the necessity of liturgical renewal, and of study concerning the sacraments in the Korean Church. The Faith and Order Commission of the Korean National Council of Churches is planning to discuss the question of the sacraments in the near future. At this juncture, Korean Methodists will have a great opportunity to contribute when they fully appreciate and recapture Wesley's attitude to the sacraments, applying it, as well as his evangelical spirit, to the problems which today face the Korean Church. It is our conviction that Wesley's position could significantly and relevantly contribute to constructive discussion within the movement for liturgical renewal, and study on the sacraments in the Korean Church. For Wesley the supremely important task of the Church was gospel evangelism, to bring men to Christ in "the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness."[27] To this supreme purpose everything in Wesley was subordinated. This urgent concern of Wesley for gospel evangelism enabled him to seek "unity in mission" even with those who did not come fully to recognize certain of the means of grace, or particular forms of baptism.[28] For Wesley this unity in mission was much more important than any formal unity in the mode of worship or baptism.[29] Yet, he was a churchman of firm sacramental discipline. This balance and comprehension has much to contribute to this part of the world church.

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[26] Bowmer, Op. cit., p. 205.

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[27] Sermons, I. 260.

[28] See Letters, III, 36, Sermons, II, 135-136 (Catholic Spirit).

[29] Sermons, II, 135-136.

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